BNG

NO.67

Edited by REG BRISTO

Mar

1983

THE
INTERNATIONAL
CROSBY CIRCLE

"....we had Mary Rose (Bing's sister) and Jim Pool with us for a few days. Also Bob Crosby was here when he had the chance. They are all such wonderful people. It is interesting to hear some of the stories about Bing that could only be told by a brother, brother-in-law or sister. To a person they had nothing but the best to say about Bing, his character and the way he conducted his life in general. They also cleared up a lot of rumours as hogwash. One that comes to mind concerns his first four boys. Jim said certainly they did not do everything that a father would wish but they were far from forgotten. When I asked what they were doing now his reply was 'nothing much' - they don't have to as they were very well taken care of by Bing and Dixie. It is nice to hear the good things from those that know when the press &c. tries to seek out anything derogatory....."

BOB LUNDBERG,
BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(in a letter to the ICC)

No.67 BING March, 1983

Organ of The International Crosby Circle. Secretary/Editor: Reg Bristo, 7 Greenmeadow Close, CWMBRAN, GWENT, NP44 4PJ

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IMPORTANT NOTE: Apologise that page nos. have gone awry in certain places, BUT, reading sequence is not interfered with and is continuous. On page 14 it says "Cont on p....." acfually, it is continued on PAGE 27. Whew! What a way to have to start!

THE BIG BING EVENT MAY 7th

unadorned pronouncement from organiser JOHN MARSHALL, 39 Kings Rd., Teddington, Midd'x. to whom all applications, letters &c. should be addressed.

If you were out shopping for a mean, miserable, ugly-looking year, then 1983 would appear to be right up your street. Unless, that is, you happen to be in this seat, reading mail from Newcastle, Cardiff, Bristol, Manchester, even Dublin and Belfast and presently contemplating sending out over 160, thus far, medals - for services to a cause that has asked quite a lot in such difficult times. Coming in on top of Christmas and demand £12. Some neck! It had to be done that way though otherwise it would have been too late. These things take money AND time, if you are to get everything the way it has to be. But they responded, just as I was certain they would - from even further away than was intended and almost any one of them fully aware of what being short of a job, or a bob, means. If there was any small disappointment, it was that many of those closer to London - often the most vocal about a lack of action, failed to understand how important a full involvement in this special occasion was and it has laid extra weight on those who have had to very truly put their money where there mouth was. We greatly appreciate that. Its a wonderful thing to read how a genuine, all the way through fan, thinks at such a time.

We are to be on video, too, so it won't ever have to be a lost day. By the week following there'll be a three-hour cassette available at somewhere around £12, with EVERYONE have their chance to shine and be a star.

(Cont. over...

The Waldorf, across the street from Drury Lane, with Covent Garden at its rear is minutes on foot from either Holborn, Aldwych or Charing Cross tube stations, and adjacent car-parking is no problem. Dancing, cabaret, four star meal, all the activities of the day as quoted in my circular plus things we haven't any need to mention, such as knowing you are in the best company AND playing your important part in commemorating a meaningful anniversary - you ought to give it a thought while its still available. Booking goes on straight through until the first week in April and YOU could give us that 250 figure we'd love to see. You've read about the massive groups that congregate for other popular figures throughout the year and maybe just this once we can show the true blue and gold feeling is still there right out in the open. Its still humanity's only way of showing how it feels, being in public and saying so, loud and clear.

The Editor doesn't necessarily agree with the views and opinions expressed by contributors; by the same token they are not expected to agree in toto with his.

EDITORIAL

Television treated Bing - and therefore us - scurvily at Christmas 1982. We live in a forgetful world; perhaps not. A changing world more likely. It is clear that the BBC and ITV watch each other warily at the festive seasons. The competition for the latest 'disaster' movie, or the latest Bond extravaganza of mild lunacy, is keen and expensive. Even so, while we haven't kept records, it does seem the first Christmas for a very long time that one of Bing's film escapisms hasn't been fitted in over the holiday somewhere, and it was particularly noticeable this year as (as some members pointed out as they lived on turkey and cake) the holiday seem to go on and on. And on!

This issue contains momentous news in that the Bing Crosby Historical Society now has concrete plans for acquiring Bing's birthplace. And they feel, rightly we are certain, that our members want to be a part of this praiseworthy endeavour.

Against the lack of television Crosby we did have the consolation of seeing Bing's name very prominent on account of the issue of the LITTLE DRUMMER BOY duet with David Bowie. It was certainly a novel situation, provoking all kinds of thoughts! Oddly enough, however, from what we heard on all sides was that the entertainment presented by television Christmas 1982 was particularly dreary and uninteresting. Perhaps the planners next year will take a different view of things - especially if members act on the ideas of member Trevor Wagstaff in this issue.

And we have the delight at least of an album, right out of the blue so to speak, giving a lot of members a host of Crosby songs, or performances they've never even heard before. And now its March - we're not out of the wood yet but its a solid fact that Spring just cannot be far away.

So, we can be full of cheer - you're never alone when you have a Crosby record!

Original Material (C) 1983.

THE CROSBY FAMILY HOME

IMPORTANT NEWS

The following communication was received jointly signed by Ken Twiss, President of The Bing Crosby Historical Society in Tacoma, USA and Mary Rose Pool, Honorary President - and of course, Bing's sister.

> We have great news to share with you. The Bing Crosby Historical Society has received a signed document that permits the Society to have first refusal to purchase Bing's birthplace. This is what we have been hoping for; it allows us to do many things that we could not do before.
>
> The Crosby home at 1112 North "J" Street in Tacoma would be used to display Crosby memorabilia. The Crosby home would be open to the public on a daily schedule for viewing the furniture, pictures and artifacts of Bing Crosby's life. A room would be set aside as an office for the Society. Purchasing the home would give a boost to BCHS for international recognition.
>
> The enclosed brochure (see next page) describes in greater detail the Crosby home and the plans we have for using it. What we need now is to start a fund for purchasing the Crosby home. We are convinced a fair and equitable price will be set for the house and property.
>
> We are asking for your help! The Directors have requested Dr. Eugene Wiegman, a member of the (BCHS) Board, to design a fund-raising campaign to acquire the necessary funds to purchase the Crosby home. Dr. Wiegman comes highly recommended: former president of Pacific Lutheran University, former Cabinet member of Washington State Government, well-known nationalspeaker, and successful fund-raising co-ordinator. He believes that with support from Society members, interested friends, businesses and foundations, the necessary funds can be raised.
>
> We will keep you informed of further developments. If you have any queries please feel free to contact or write to us.

We feel this is an important project for us in the ICC though most of us will perhaps never be able to visit the States. The project is highly laudable and a tangible, even concrete, way to help perpetuate the memory of Bing Crosby even for future generations. However, before committing the support of the Circle - and we feel sure members WILL want to take part - we did feel it necessary to make further enquiries, on the following lines:

(a) What precisely does "first refusal" mean?

(Cont. page 8

TACOMA: *BING'S BIRTHPLACE*

Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby was born in Tacoma, Washington May 3, 1903. Bing's birthplace stands in a quite attractive residential area of Tacoma, with a view of Commencement Bay. It is located across the street from St. Patrick's Church where Bing was Christened. The home is in good repair. The owners have signed a document granting **THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY** first refusal to purchase the birthplace of Bing. The officers of the Society believe it would be an ideal move to preserve the memory of Bing and the Crosby family.

Bing and Mary Rose

The Crosby Home would be used as a museum, open to the public. It would contain:

- Furniture from the 1900 era
- Crosby family pictures
- Bing memorabilia
- Films
- Phonograph recordings
- Printed material
- Historic papers and pictures
- Newspaper clippings
- Sheet music
- Books and magazine articles

The Crosby Home would also serve as the office of **THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.**

Bing's Birthplace Helping to save The Crosby Home

Ken Twiss
President

Mary Rose Crosby Pool
Honorary President

Crosby museum one step closer

Historical society gains right to purchase home where singer was born

By JIM ERICKSON

The Bing Crosby Historical Society has obtained a legal document that will allow them to purchase a North End home which was the birthplace of the famous entertainer.

Ken Twiss of Tacoma, the society's president, said the document solidifies plans to turn the home at 1112 N. J St. into a museum containing Bing Crosby artifacts. The document is a "right of first refusal," giving the society first option to buy the house.

The agreement is with the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Morry Abbott, who have lived there more than 35 years, according to Twiss.

Crosy was born in the house May 3, 1903.

The agreement enables the society to go ahead with plans to raise funds to purchase the house.

Eugene Wiegman, a society member and fundraising chairman, said he is not certain how much the price tag will be. But he noted that houses in that area "are going for $70,000 to $85,000."

Wiegman said several prominent people and key foundations have made financial commitments. Interest in the project is being enhanced, Wiegman said, by the circulation of a one-foot statuette of Crosby at area banks and businesses. The statuette is a replica of a sculpture of the performer with his pipe, which is on display at Gonzaga University, Crosby's alma mater.

It is hoped the statuette will eventually wind up in a museum, along with other memorabilia Twiss has stored in a Tacoma building. The society has received a lot of Crosby's belongings from society members and friends who bought them at an auction Crosby's widow, Kathryn Crosby, held last May.

One of those items is a straw hat that Twiss recently brought with him on a visit to Crosby's birthplace. Crosby lived in Tacoma for two years before his family moved to Spokane. Crosby died at the age of 74 while golfing in Spain. The historical society formed the following year.

Crosby's sister, Mary Rose Crosby Pool, who lives in the San Francisco area, is honorary president of the society.

Once the house — located within the boundaries of Tacoma's historical district — is purchased by the society, Wiegman said, plans call for refurbishing the house "to its early 1900s vintage." The house is in excellent condition, Wiegman said.

'White Christmas' and the Groaner

MY hobby is a life long affection for the voice of Bing Crosby, the man who changed the whole face of popular singing during the 1930s.

In fact, every great popular singer since, owes a lot to his style, Al Bowly, Denny Dennis, Como, Sinatra, Dean Martin, Michael Holliday, the list is endless.

Bernard Wells prefers a more religious rendering of the spirit of Christmas, than Bing's trite "White Christmas" offering (Bernard' words).

Actually I do not disagree with him on the triteness of the lyrics, but actually anyone who has read the biography of Bing Crosby will know he didn't like the lyrics much himself but the producers of the film "Holiday Inn 1942" where the song was first featured and the writer of the song, Irving Berlin, insisted on its inclusion in the film.

Actually Bing was a very religious person and his portrayal of a Roman Catholic priest in the film "Going My Way" (an Oscar winning role) was not entirely coincidental.

Bing Crosby in "Going My Way."

May I suggest the song was popular because of the war, the season and Bing's marvellous baritone voice.

CLAUDE BISHOP,
Cotswold Road,
Strelley.

BING CROSBY
An achievement

WHAT A RECORD

ISN'T it good to see the name Bing Crosby up high in the charts again? When you consider that he was topping the charts in the Thirties, Forties and Fifties, it's quite an achievement.—*Barry Sandercock, Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks.*

(b) was the purchase likely to be in the foreseeable future?

The world being what it is, or perhaps the people in it, it is a natural corollary that if it is known a certain item, or property, is badly needed, the price is apt to go up! One is held, so to speak, to ransom.

These observations in no way impinge on the integrity and utter goodwill of Ken Twiss and his colleagues. That goes without question.

Ken Twiss did indeed answer our queries by return of post, saying:

> First, Dr. Wiegman has set the realistic deadline of two years for the raising of the necessary funds and hopes that the drive can end much sooner than that. Many foundations and monied people are being contacted. I might add that Dr. Wiegman has never had a failure in co-ordinating fund drives.
>
> Secondly, the 'first refusal' is the required legal document for our being able to raise money as this could not be done without the present owners knowledge. The owner and Dr. Wiegman have talked on the matter and been assured that when they are ready to sell the price would be set by outside appraisers, plus a small percentage for historic value which, of course, the owners are entitled to do.
>
> Lastly, IF for any reason the house cannot be purchased by the BCHS, all donations would be returned. This also is a legal point that had to be considered. Our attorney has worked out all the legal points so that each party is well protected.
>
> I appreciate your questions and hope they are answered to your satisfaction. One reason I have waited so long to get started on this project is to be sure that it would be successful. With the present economic situation I know it will be no easy task, but I feel it is now or never!
>
> Thanks for your interest and all of us here appreciate the many faithful Bing followers in the United Kingdom.
>
> KEN TWISS.

This clearly points to earnest and well-organised aims and we feel the members of the International Crosby Circle will want to be involved in at least subscribing to the purchase-fund. Ken rightly points to the current economic situation, and we can underline that. However, we are sure many, perhaps most, members will like to feel they have contributed tangibly to the purchase of the house where Bing was born.

Subscriptions are, therefore, cordially invited. No amount is suggested or hinted at. It is entirely up to the individual circumstances of members bearing in mind what has already been said about the economic situation.

Because of the work involved, and because we want an entirely independent "collector" we have asked a member's co-operation and assistance. The secretary feels this should be undertaken, and seen, as a separate project. All donations for the fund therefore should be sent to:

MRS. JEAN BIGNELL,
21, ST. ANDREWS AVENUE
W E M B L E Y
MIDD'X. HAO 2QB

Jean has arranged with her bank to open a separate account; when the time seems appropriate the money in that account will be converted to dollars and forwarded to the BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

In order to keep expenses to the minimum receipts will NOT be sent. If one is desired, however, a stamped, addressed, envelope should be enclosed with the donation

A LIST OF DONORS, BUT NOT THE AMOUNTS, WILL BE PUBLISHED IN "BING". IT IS APPRECIATED THAT CIRCUMSTANCES OBVIOUSLY VARY GREATLY FROM MEMBER TO MEMBER AND EACH CAN ONLY GIVE WHAT THEY CAN REASONABLY AFFORD.

Any objections to this procedure will certainly be considered.

There is, of course, a well-established and well-stocked Crosby museum at Gonzaga University which will ensure a degree of perpetuity for Bing but the inspiration of buying his birth-place for the reasons already stated seems to be eminently worthwhile.

IMPORTANT! The arrangements for sending donations apply to UK members. American/Canadian/Australian members should find it more convenient to send any donations direct to the BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 8013
TACOMA,
WASHINGTON 98408
U. S. A.

European members should only send sterling to Mrs. Bignell.

On the previous page there is a newspaper story about the proposed house-purchase from an American newspaper.

There is also a letter that appeared in THE DAILY MIRROR by our own member, Barry Sandercock. It is good to see our members writing to the papers about Bing, and those who get records played on radio requests. Every little helps as a noted old lady was wont to remark! Les Gaylor, of course, has been his prolific self with letters about his Bing-room and the value of his Crosby memorabilia as compared with a much-publicised sale of Beatles' items.

The letter headed 'WHITE CHRISTMAS' AND THE GROANER is of special interest. The writer, CLAUDE BISHOP is not, alas, one of our members but obviously he should be! It will be appreciated that someone had written to the paper criticising the popularity of WHITE CHRISTMAS and suggesting it was not the real, religious, spirit of Yuletide. Mr. Bishop's reply is really admirable.

We feel he must be unaware of us as we were of him until a diligent member sent us this cutting. And this is a situation we would dearly like to remedy.

But we don't even know where Strelley is! If any member knows we would be very grateful. If, moreover, he could actually contact the gentleman with a view to getting in touch with us we would be even more delighted.

Here is a very pleasant story on Bing we were glad to see, thanks to an Irish member. We're not quite sure of the magazine or we would gratefully give it acknowledgement, as well as to the author, John L. Dunne.

Mr. Dunne is well informed and his story more accurate than most. There is the error of the date of Bing's marriage to Kathryn; also we feel that Bing carried out a singing engagement in Ireland under the aegis of George O'Reilly in the mid-60's.

But mainly it is a nice story to read and as the bulk of our members are unlikely to have seen it it is reproduced here. It appeared last December.....

The Crosby magic lingers on

BY JOHN J. DUNNE

His songs still survive and his easy-going personality may survive too as the best thing that has happened to twentieth-century entertainment.

"HONESTLY, I think I've stretched a talent which is so thin it's almost opaque over a quite unbelievable term of years."

Bing Crosby once said that about himself and probably nobody else is surprised now that this opaque talent survives so long after his death. It's being freshly discovered on tape and disc and video by a new generation and obstinately held on to by long-time fans.

His records still dominate the world of entertainment; his old movies top the television ratings; Crosby memorabilia is in consant demand and his houses remain tourist meccas, especially the one in Burbank on the palm-lined boulevards of Hollywood which he shared for so many happy years with his first wife Dixie Lee.

Their first home

The Los Angeles tour buses stop outside that early Crosby home where two happy people made it a warm and cherished place during the years when their four sons were growing up. Up the coast in San Francisco the plush home of his second wife Kathryn Grant gets its quota of attention too.

Not only in the charts, on the airwaves and the

television and cinema screens is Harry Lillis Crosby remembered. In one small way he shares a touching human tribute with another screen star of an earlier day.

Nobody has ever reached his proportions.
BOB HOPE

For years after the death of the legendary Rudolph Valentino an unknown woman in black placed flowers on his grave on a certain day every year.

A woman comes to Bing's grave every week to keep it tidy, driving twenty-five miles from her home to do so, but her identity is no mystery. She is Marian Massey who first met the crooner in the 1940s when she was a hostess in a Hollywood radio station. She has been a devoted fan and admirer ever since.

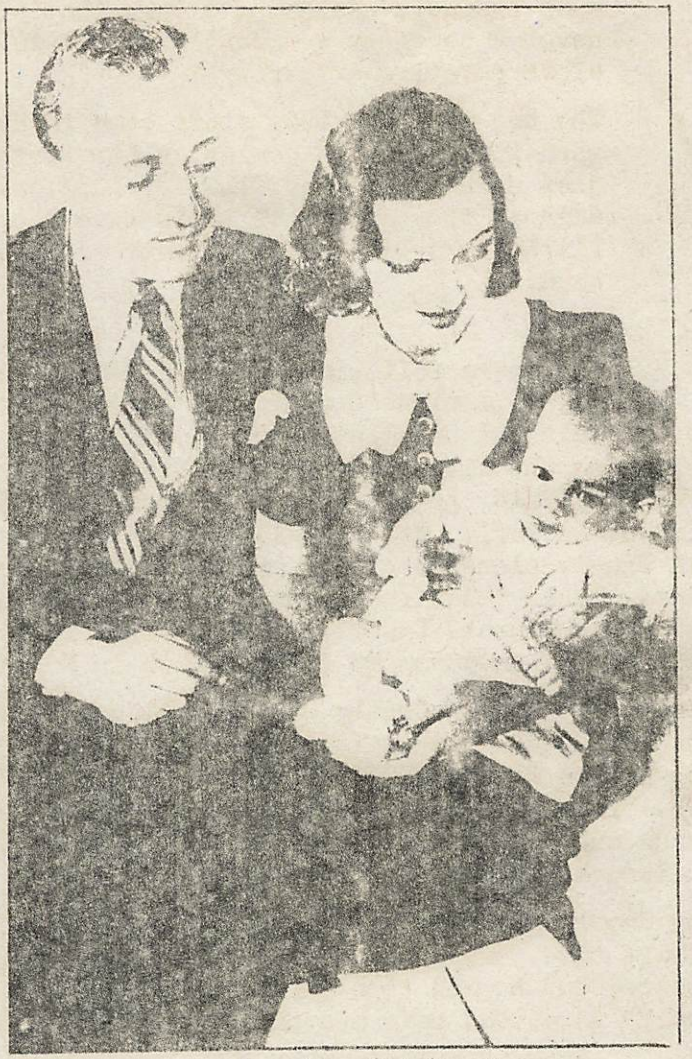
"I was struck by what a nice, gentle person he was," she recalls. "Even though a big star, he always could spare a moment to chat. He was always very courteous. It's probably the way he smiled. It made you feel warm inside as if you'd known him all his life."

Death on the links

Bing died on a golf course, a place where he had always found happiness. The faithful Marian remembers the day.

"I was on my way to San Diego to meet a friend. I said 'Oh, no' and started to cry and I cried all the way down to San Diego."

An auction of Crosby memorabilia was recently held by his widow in a San Francisco gallery so that his fans might have something belonging to him. Furniture taken from his six homes, a large collection of old 78 records and tape recordings he had made. There were letters, photographs, old sheet music, trophies he had won and costumes he had worn in his long career in films.



Young parenthood. Bing, Dixie and offspring.

That double date

They met when Bing was filling one of his first big-time engagements as a singer at Hollywood's famed Coconut Grove. One evening he and a friend went out on a double date and met a girl from Tennessee called Dixie Lee and it was love at first sight. They were married in the Blessed Sacrament Church on Sunset Boulevard on September 29th, 1930, Dixie being not quite nineteen and Bing ten years older.

Years later a friend of those early days recalls, "That was one thing he'd never miss — church. No matter what happened, any time he went off drunk or not, he sure found his way to Mass every time. He'd crawl to church. That's one thing that was beautiful about him."

Bing and Dixie settled down to married life and his career prospered and he became a big name. The temptations were never far away. Radio and film studios were full of ambitious and glamorous young starlets, but although Harry Lillis Crosby was as susceptible as the next man, so strong was the love between him and Dixie that she never felt threatened. The babies came in rapid succession and that bond grew stronger and before they knew what was happening, Bing was a superstar and there were four boisterous sons rampaging round the house.

"It was an inspiring experience to see them together," a friend of those years remembers.

"He was an average guy who could carry a tune."

That was what Bing said once when asked by somebody to compose his own epitaph.

Rumours and trust

Of course there were rumours of other women now and then. Once he was reported to be interested in screen star Rhonda Fleming with whom he had co-starred in *A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court* in 1949, but his friends have always insisted that there was nothing between them and that they were "just good friends".

When he went through his front door, he forgot he was Bing Crosby. He was just the father of three children and two dogs.
THE CROSBY FAMILY BUTLER

His old friends who knew him at the beginning of his career recall his early years with Dixie. It must have been one of the happiest love affairs ever in Hollywood, they tell you.

The Crosby magic lingers

"It says much for the trust that Dixie had in him that such business assignments (and that's all they were) never caused her a moment's uncertainty," claims a close relative of hers.

The end of their love story came in November 1952 when Dixie died of cancer on her birthday. Bing had just made the film LITTLE BOY LOST and as somebody said at the time, with Dixie gone there were five little boys lost – Bing Crosby and his four young sons.

THE LONELY YEARS

The years following Dixie's death were years of intense loneliness which the pace and demands of his career could not dissipate, but a year or two later when he was making the film based on his greatest singing success, WHITE CHRISTMAS, he met a young actress from Texas named Olive Grandstaff. She was nineteen, about a year younger than Bing's eldest son Gary and her stage name was Kathryn Grant. Their relationship endured and they were married in St. Anne's Church, Las Vegas, in October 1967 (sic) and spent their honeymoon on Bing's ranch in Nevada.

"Working with Bing Crosby was marvellous," the late Princess Grace of Monaco once said. As Grace Kelly she co-starred with him in THE COUNTRY GIRL and in her last film HIGH SOCIETY. It was in the latter production that they sang the famous duet 'TRUE LOVE' which topped the million sales mark and brought them a golden disc.

Bing Crosby made his first singing appearance in Ireland only a short time before his death when he sang in Dublin's Gaiety Theatre, but he had been a frequent visitor to this country, usually to attend race meetings, his great passion after golf.

The unsuspecting Irishmen got the surprise of their lives one Sunday afternoon when walking (or probably trespassing) in the grounds of Lismore Castle in Co. Waterford. Coming round a corner they were suddenly confronted by Bing who was staying in the castle as the guest of Fred Astaire's sister Lady Charles Cavendish. Inevitably Bing lived up to his reputation and obliged them with an impromptu song.

That is the sort of memory that keeps the legend alive. The films are still attracting the fans, the records are still selling which is why Kathryn is still getting the red carpet at airports and his children attract the press and television cameras wherever they go. It is why the name Bing Crosby has become as closely associated with Christmas as that of Charles Dickens. White Christmas will continue down the years always new with the old Crosby charm.

Editor: By and large and except for a few date errors this is an excellent summing up of the one true superstar even if Bing thought he had"a talent so thin as to be opaque" ! A guy who could carry a tune, forsooth!

That he could! Begorrah !

AT TACKING CROSBY

Fear not! I'm not embarking on the despicable yet futile task of showing what a fiend that man Bing really was! Not for me to tell you how he staggered around drunk and disorderly, of how he unmercifully lashed his sons, or even that far from being a genial, smiling, troubadour he was really a cold-hearted 'loner' who had no time for his fellow-artists - etc. etc. Such efforts, anyway, are doomed to failure.

No, we hope our headline will become a little more clear as we proceed. It was many, many moons ago that the illustrious Dr. Mize wrote a book carefully and diligently analysing the man Crosby and the Crosby style. He was, of course, concerned with the voice. And I am concerned with the voice in this little monologue - written monologue at that!

But analysing the Crosby voice is a hardy perennial - a subject on which Crosby admirers love to dwell and return to again and again. It provides a very fertile field, too. A considerable part of the mail received touches on the subject. We have the extremists, of course. Those who aver that Bing never sang the same after 1934! Against this we have those who maintain Bing was singing as well in 1977 as he was in 1932! To which we can only conceded - it takes all sorts!

Others maintain that a vast and dramatic change came over the Crosby voice in 1937, or 1943, or 1951 - and so on. Of course the voice changed. Who can, for example, expect a man of 25 to sing like a man of 50, or 60 or 77? We have only to consider ourselves! This does not mean the voice of Bing didn't always remain unique; its inherent timbre, the rich roundness of the tones unparalleled, the always-recognisable voice of Bing - it was all there from pre-1926 to October 14, 1977.

We have delved and analysed the jazz-orientated Bing of the very early years. We have referred to the birth of the smooth balladeer. From the zestful youthful Bing to the mature artistry of Bing that developed over the years - taking in, of course, radio, records, films and ultimately TV.

Yet never to my entire satisfaction was a revealing, inspiring, assessment produced. But now, with all due modesty, I think I have come across a new angle. Well, it suits me.

We are well used to the fact that with Bing's recording career running from 1926 to 1977 on records it is a simple matter to draw a late 20's, early 30's album from the shelf. And immediately follow it with one from the 'Seventies. Or any other decade, for that matter. Look at BING SINGS BROADWAY reviewed in this issue - a

delightful compilation of seldom-heard 'show' songs from the 40's and 50's - and I feel it was listening to this album that began to crystallise a theory I'd been building up. It led me to play others from varying periods in a quite concentrated period of listening; this in itself is a rare and exceedingly pleasant change for me! So often I listen to Bing whilst attempting to do other things connected with the Circle.

Suddenly I knew what Jimmy Durante felt when he became the guy who found the lost chord! I had hit on (to my own satisfaction at least) the one really big change that came over the Crosby voice! In a nutshell, Bing changed from an aggressive attacker - to a Bland Bing. I should put 'aggressive' in quotation marks thus because I don't mean the word in its truly fighting connotations. But from a period of 1927 to 1937, a nice convenient ten year span, Bing used to 'attack' a song. He used to take hold of it, almost wring its neck, give it the full treatment in fact. There are literally dozens of examples. Listen to, for example:

HOW MUCH do I LOVE you,
I tell you no LIES &c.

or: Sailor BEWARE, BEWARE of your heart &c., The touch of your lips ON MINE. You can note it endlessly. Certainly it was apparent from 1927 onwards taking in the days of "vocalrefrains" with Paul Whiteman and Gus Arnhem. I'M GONNA GET YOU! really does sound determined; perhaps there is a musical term which denotes "aggression"? I don't know. Listen to I'M PLAYING WITH FIRE and what Bing did to that! Or again, a typical example, I FOUND A MILLION DOLLAR BABY (1931), SHE REMINDS ME OF YOU, and especially TEMPTATION (1933) Perhaps I'm not conveying too well what I mean, but if you listen to these performances and then listen to the later 1940-ish versions it should become plainer. Bing himself had theories on this himself, vide CALL ME LUCKY: He said:

> "I'm not a singer; I'm a phraser. That means I don't think of a song in terms of notes; I try to think what it purports to say lyrically. That way it sounds more natural, and anything natural is more listenable.....time was when I let lyrics roll out of me without thinking how they sounded. Playing some of the records I made in the 1930's I notice that in many of them I was tired; my voice was bad and had a lot of frogs in it. The notes were generally in key but sometimes I barely made them and they sounded strained. But I paid no attention to whether they were good or bad when I made them. And they sold.....When I play some of the records I've made in the past year or two (late 40's early 50's - Ed) they're too vocal. They're oversung. I'm listening too much to what I sing when I sing it, and it makes me self-conscious..."

Well, Bing didn't seem to know that those 'frogs' were an inherent part of the Crosby magic from the outset. True also his voice was (and always was) subjected to tremendous demands, hence strain. True also Bing was much younger, zestful, vigorous. Then there was the unprecedented 'sob'! And most certainly there was that inate ability to accentuate the right words of a lyric - as illustrated above and indeed, in almost any song up until around 1937.

Perhaps I can be more definite: perhaps the change from the attacking Bing to the bland purveyor dated indeed from 1937 - from WAIKIKI WEDDING forsooth and his first trip to Hawaii, SWEET LEILANI (reputedly the first million-seller tho' no true Crosby fan will ever accept that)

(Cont. on page

MRS. CROSBY'S BOOK

The following publicity hand-out has been received, accompanied by a personal note from Kathryn Crosby:

TO BING'S FRIENDS:

In March of 1983 Kathryn Crosby's long-awaited autobiography, MY LIFE WITH BING, a 354-page 8½ x 11 inch volume, including 177 pages of photographs from Bing's albums, will be published simultaneously in Europe and the United States.

The dust jacket has has Bing's favorite pictures of himself and Kathryn on the front and back, and the following comments by Bob Hope on the inside:

> "He was a fifty-year-old superstar, the best-known face in the world. She was a nineteen-year-old contract player, and the only thing that they had in common was a love that spanned generations, religions, and geography.
>
> "Before he met Kathryn, Bing had no thought of marrying anyone, let alone a teen-ager more than thirty years his junior. Why then did he marry her? Simply because he couldn't help himself. He was utterly captivated by the freshest face, the loveliest form, and the most sparkling wit that ever graced Hollywood. (With the sole exception of Dolores Reed Hope, of course. I agreed to be truthful, not suicidal.)
>
> "What Bing failed to notice in his infatuation was that this was no mere ball of Southern fluff but a powerful personality with a whim of iron. For twenty-four years Kathryn alternately delighted, bewildered, and infuriated but never bored him, and kept him young and vibrant to the very end.
>
> "A prodigious reader, Bing was the most articulate man I've ever met. It was an open secret that his casual conversation was far superior to the best efforts of his script writers. Less well publicised was the fact that Kathryn, who had abandoned a literary career for those of a wife, mother, teacher, nurse and actress, continued to wield a golden pen, which filled her letters and diaries with an exact record of the genius that was Bing and the madness that was Hollywood.
>
> "Here at last she shares with the American public an intimate portrait of her life with the Bing that only she and his closest friends knew. You will meet the real Crosby in it, and be sure to give him my very best as always."

In January MY LIFE WITH BING will be serialised in four installments im The Star, and Kathryn will appear in thousands of TV spots.

In February the book will be syndicated in newspapers worldwide, and a limited pre-publication Crosby Golf Tournament edition will be briefly available to Bing's friends and fans. A copy

may be obtained directly from the publisher by sending 29.95 dollars to Collage, 1200 South Willis Avenue, Wheeling, Illinois 60090.

Members should notethat the last two paragraphs above are for American consumption. Although the book will be published here as indicated in the circular there is, at the time of writing, no indication who the publishers will be but no doubt that information will speedily become available. At £20.00 per copy (according to current dollar-exchange rates) the book is large with matching price. That there are 177 pages of what may be considered so far unpublished photographs may prove a big attraction.

We know that many have been keenly awaiting this book; some of us, however, are rather jaundiced with books on Mr. Crosby, for reasons that are probably known.

> What we want, desperately want, is a definitive book on Bing Crosby written by someone who experienced his emergence. Someone who remembers just what a sensational innovator he was - the emergence of a popular style singer of popular songs who instantly (and for that matter, many years afterwards) made all others seem grossly inferior.
>
> We long for a book that deals with Bing's almost limitless talents. His talents as a singer, an actor, a comedian, a sportsman, an all-round entertainer of consummate and matchless ability.
>
> A book that deals with these things that were apparent to the whole world. Not books that tirelessly and relentlessly probe in nit-picking fashion for flaws in his private life, as if nettled that Bing Crosby was, for more than 50 years, looked upon as the embodiment of all that was fine in that fickle profession known as show-business.
>
> Not that we revere Bing as a saint. That would be a ludicrous interpretation of what we are saying. Wecompletely, gladly, accept that underneath all the talents we have outlined, that Bing was a total human being. His private life, for us, remains private, and we are not desperately anxious to read of the struggles that inevitably beset him while attempting to combine the activities of being the world's greatest (and truest) superstar with that of a strict family man.
>
> Whatever interpretations may be put on his private life they are not really relevant to the Crosby story - the story of Bing the supreme entertainer.

If the books that have been published since he was safely deceased are studied it will be seen that not one fulfills the qualifications outlined above. We hope some day that book <u>will</u> appear.

This in no way prejudges the book about to appear; it will suffer from the drawback that the author was not around to appreciate the Bing of the 20's and 30's. Thus the stupendous era that was really Bing Crosby cannot possibly be explored.

DESERT ISLAND BING

Over the years we have spent many a weary hour working out our favourite Bing record; or our favourite ten Bing records. Invariably the inevitable conclusion has been a weak surrender! It just cannot be done we bemoan. Now, DON WOOD (of Fetcham, Surrey) comes up with a brilliant inspiration, updating the well-known Plomley theme (and acknowledgements to Mr. Roy in the process) of being cast away on a desert isle with eight Crosby ALBUMS! Surely this is a more realistic approach and a path most of us may be emboldened to follow. It will not be without its frustrations, of course, for one album may contain your heart's delight while some of the other songs may be in your "middling" category - if there is such a classification on Bing albums! But the scope is enormously widened with Don's idea - and here he gives his choice:

To be cast away on a desert island with eight Crosby albums, a record player, and little else is a daunting situation. It is, of course, a slight variation on Mr. Plomley's guidelines - albums instead of single recorded items in deference to Mr. Crosby's phenomenal output - and with only one artist's work to be considered. It becomes even more daunting when eight bankers are to be selected from well over a thousand 'matches'.

To the task of choosing the eight a ruthless approach is essential. Some of my cherished albums didn't make it simply because the choice is so rigid in its finality that the slightest weakening in resolution not to be able to survive without them automatically creates disqualification.

In the main, however, the prospect is quite delightful. No more voice from the kitchen - She who must be obeyed - "When are you going to stop listening to Bing and fix that tap-washer?" . 'Er indoors, forsooth. No more warm feeling that the fall in inflation imparts on one trudging from one Job Centre to the next. No more inane talk of fall-out shelters, J.R., Arthur Scargill, Norman Tebbitt, Top of the Pops and instant packet soup! Shangrhi-La! Really La! So, here are my eight, arrived at bearing all the foregoing in mind, with the reasons for selection:

No. 1. CBS 66206: BING CROSBY IN HOLLYWOOD 1930-1934. Record 2

If ever a record had the true feeling of Bing's performance on film then this is it. It also contains two of the best half-dozen songs he ever sang, namely LOVE IN BLOOM and TEMPTATION. There is not one mediocre song on this record. It chose itself.

No. 2 Columbia CL 2830 PAUL WHITEMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA featuring Bing Crosby

My admiration for Bix has not diminished over the years, and this record gives me the best of both worlds. The formative jazz style of Bing coupled with those superb Beiderbecke solos supply just that.

No. 3 MGM C844 BING AND SATCHMO

The need to preserve a keen sense

of humour in my island predicament would be vital. Bing and Louis had a rapport that is a joy to the listener. Who could fail to be amused by BROTHER BILL, or SUGAR? What a tonic for a rainy day or two.

No. 4 BRUNSWICK LAT 8228 BING AND THE DIXIELAND BANDS.

Having a simple philosophy that music should either move one emotionally or promote foot-tapping, I naturally have a genuine bias towards the two-beat bar. Bing has always sounded so comfortable in front of a "trad" line-up - indeed, he so averred himself - and in my book this is a fine example of a singer enjoying the job he's doing.

No. 5 BING'S HOLLYWOOD: BING 1 EASY TO REMEMBER

I chose this for mainly two reasons. Firstly it contains SWANEE RIVER which, when I saw 'Mississippi' many moons ago, brought a lump to my throat; and secondly my favourite Crosby song WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE. Listening to the latter, one delights in Georgie Stoll's jaunty, cantering backing. But what is more important is the gentleman playing the cocoanut shell obligato in the background. I would spend many happy hours sitting in on this one - there would, no doubt, be an abundance of cocoanut shells available.

No. 6 ACE OF HEARTS AH145 BELOVED HYMNS

A Christian belief would be a great support during the bouts of deep depression that would surely come in my lonely predicament. What better way to uplift the spirit than to play one track from this lovely album every Sunday?

No. 7 DECCA SKL 5261 FEELS GOOD - FEELS RIGHT

Many of the tracks on this album were surely made with a marooned islander in mind. AS TIME GOES BY, TIME ON MY HANDS, THE WAY WE WERE, and, specifically, WHEN I LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND; at the risk of being reduced to tears by these four alone I chose this album for THERE'S NOTHING THAT I HAVEN'T SUNG ABOUT which would remind me of the many, many, favourites left behind.

No. 8 WARNER BROTHERS WM 4034 101 GANG SONGS Part 1.

Being a wine-making enthusiast for many years, it would be but a short while before a variety of stills would be bubbling their noxious liquids around my little hut. If my luck held there would be a plentiful supply of mangoes on the island - mango brandy is a delightfully potent brew. Sitting under the stars listening to these Gang Songs, and joining in with my alcoholic baritone, the party would last into the dawn.

So, as the sunn sinks slowly in the west, leave me in the knowledge that I'm surrounded by my favourite music and the prospect that a Man Friday will soon appear is a distinct possibility - we shall found the first branch of the ICC (Central Pacific). Just pop my copies of BING in a bottle and the TRADE WINDS will hopefully waft them to my ISLE OF GOLDEN DREAMS. My quarterly despatches back to UK will follow the same means from FAR AWAY PLACES with undoubtedly strange-sounding names....

(Cont. over

Editor: Don Wood has certainly, and with percipience, made a sterling selection for his desert isle sojourn. From where we sit its a true Crosby-man choice. While paying due tribute to the halcyon days of the 'Thirties he has not spurned the Bing of the 'Seventies - subtly paying homage perhaps to the incredible span of Bing's recording activities. Note too the awareness of both spiritual and humourous needs!

We feel fairly certain that Don's effort will prove not only of great interest in this updated version of an old theme, but inspire others to make their choice. And these we'll be delighted to receive and publish.

Don's choice could, Bing being Bing, be duplicated no doubt and there are many albums necessarily eliminated. It is not, we think, essential to possess all the albums available, desirable as that may be, but possession of the LP-ography - which we feel most members now possess - will of course be of tremendous assistance in making a compilation of eight albums for the exercise. For despite Don's knowledgeable choice you will readily observe the absence in his list of say, Hawaiian albums, Irish albums, "cowboy" or Western albums, such as HOME ON THE RANGE, TWILIGHT ON THE TRAIL, RHYTHM ON THE RANGE and HOW THE WEST WAS WON - incidentally, choice of a double-album set would, of course, count as TWO albums, naturally! And one might also note the absence of a Christmas album - though a little thought will illumine the prospect of Christmas on a desert isle to be hardly worth celebrating except possibly in the spiritual sense - and Don has taken care of that!

So, eight albums of Bing's to take on a Desert Island. Let's have yours - with brief reasons for the choice as Don has done.

ANOTHER BOOK WHICH CERTAINLY WARRANTS MENTIONING IS BROUGHT TO OUR NOTICE BY MR. W. H. EWERT (Ferndown, Dorset) who writes:

Although - not yet or as far as I know - available in this country members may be interested about a new book, OUR HUCKLEBERRY FRIEND - THE LIFE, TIMES, AND LYRICS OF JOHNNY MERCER which has been produced by Bob Bach (?) and Mrs. Elizabeth "Ginger" Mercer.

As you would imagine, the book is a collection of Mercer's famed lyrics, memorabilia etc. and is a splendid record of this brilliant lyricist. In its pages are produced a handwritten communication from Bing as well as typed ones, one of which typically commences: "Dear Versefulness" ! There are also photographs of Bing and Johnny.

There is also confirmation that before they were married, Bing and Ginger used to date.

With the present rate of exchange the book is not cheap, costing 24.95 dollars. With postage it becomes somewhat prohibitive, especially by airmail, in the region of £20. It may be as well to await possible publication here; meanwhile the publishers are Lyle Stuart, Inc., 120 Enterprise Avenue, Secaucus, New Jersey 07094

Johnny Mercer's association with Bing was extensive - he was the man who declared that when he heard Bing sing OL' MAN RIVER (with Paul Whiteman, 1928) he "became a fan for life".

FIFTY YEARS LATER — A CLOSER LOOK AT GOING HOLLYWOOD

BY KEITH PARKINSON

The Christmas (December last) issue of BING contained a brief article on the filming of "GOING HOLLYWOOD", which is probably one of Bing's best-documented movies. This is because not only was a lot of talent involved in setting up and making the film, but high jinks on the set have provided good biography and chat-show anecdotes for half a century. So, fifty years after its making, let's take a closer look at the movie.

Filming took place at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer with William Randolph Hearst's Cosmopolitan Production Company controlling activities because Hearst's mistress of many years, Marion Davies, was 'first billed' as leading lady. Because Bing was under contract to Paramount a loan arrangement was made. As a result Clark Gable was released by M-G-M to film "NO MAN OF HER OWN" at Paramount Studios.

Fred Lawrence Guiles, Miss Davies's biographer, detailed how the filming had its problems. Marion Davies was in the habit of turning up at the studio with a hangover and matters were not improved by the heavy drinking that went on on the studio set. Marion had a portable dressing-room which was the assembly area for herself, Bing, and actress Fifi D'Orsay. The latter has related that members of the crew would be look-outs in order that drinkers were signalled whenever Hearst appeared in order to hide the whisky. Hearst forbade Marion to drink. As if work wasn't taking a back seat already, shooting was always suspended at four in the afternoon for a 'tea-break' which usually lasted at least one hour.

> Shortly before his death in 1968 producer Walter Wanger gave a tape-recorded interview to two sociologists at the College of the City of New York. He revealed that he had to fight to gain acceptance of Bing in "GOING HOLLYWOOD" by the studio. To begin with, Metro did not want a film about Hollywood, and there was also opposition to Bing co-starring with Marion Davies simply because she had never been co-starred with anybody. Wanger stressed that once Bing was accepted the film turned out to be one of the few Marion Davies films that could be classified as success.

The film was set up by Hearst, as owner of Cosmopolitan Pictures, with M-G-M taking care of studio and releasing facilities. Ed Hatrick, Cosmopolitan's top man on the West Coast, approached Raoul Walsh to direct. The trio of Walsh, Hatrick and Wanger then jointly agreed on the casting of secondary parts by selecting Patsy Kelly, Ned Sparks, and Fifi D'Orsay. At that stage Bing had already been selected by M-G-M as leading man.

Preliminary rehearsals took place for one week at the Hearst San Simeon retreat and shooting followed at the Cosmopolitan Studio and two of M-G-M's sound stages. All outdoor locations were shot at Raoul Walsh's Encino ranch. Walsh said of Crosby: "I liked Bing. I had first met him

when he sang with the Rhythm Boys at the Ambassador's Cocoanut Grove. The appeal of "GOING HOLLYWOOD" rested more on Marion's and Bing's singing and Miss D'Orsay's studied intrigue than on the actual story. Don Stewart had done a good job with the dialogue and the humourous sequences saved the action from dragging."

Donald Ogden Stewart, who wrote the screenplay, wrote in his auto-biography how Hearst was reluctant to allow Marion Davies to play a schoolteacher. Hearst felt it did not fit the Davies image, but Walter Wanger convinced him otherwise. Of Bing, Stewart wrote: "He proved to be a marvellously calm patient passenger in a rocking boat."

SAVED BY BING'S POPULARITY

The film was 47 days in production and M-G-M's operating report shows it to have cost 914.000 dollars. Taking into account additional costs for publicity and distribution the film finally showed a loss of 269.000 dollars on M-G-M's books. Producer Wanger's comments about the film's success relate to the film going into the black only after reissues justified by Bing's increasing box-office popularity.

In the summer of 1951 Marion Davies recorded notes and reminiscences of her life on tape with the aid of a TIME-LIFE correspondent. Her memory was at fault on many occasions although her comments about Bing and "GOING HOLLYWOOD" correspond with other contemporary reports. Amongst other things, she said:

> "The dialogue didn't mean anything to me. Bing got made at me every once in a while. Sometimes I would get on the set around eleven...then at luncheon we had banquets at the bungalow. We would get back on the set around three, do a scene or so, then have tea about four-thirty. Bing was a million laughs. He was full of fun and liked to play pranks. Invariably they were on me. There was an old gag I should have known"(Miss Davies then explained how she was encouraged to study and then play a scene only to discover there was no film in the camera. She also described her fear of horses and a trick played by Bing and Raoul Walsh). "I was in the bungalow and I could see the stage about a block and a half off. I was refreshing my make-up when I heard a noise, a clattering, and I looked out. I saw Raoul Walsh and Bing on two white horses. So I screamed, 'Lock the door!' It saved my life. They were feeling pretty high, and they were going to bring the horses right into my living room.'"

THE FINAL PARTY:

Raoul Walsh received a vocal tribute from Bing at the end-of-picture party. The cast had a final drinking session and Bing sang ROLLICKING ROCKAWAY RAOUL to a piano accompaniment. A lot of collectors have acquired recordings of this item and the lyrics have been printed on a couple of occasions in Bing magazines, but in the knowledge of what went on during the film's protracted shooting schedule some of the lyrics take on a deeper significance. "We'll pop over to the Davies bungalow and maybe she'll come up with a drink" suggests Bing in a spoken interlude during the song - a remark that could hardly have pleased Hearst. But Bing's delivery of the song gives the impression that the whole episode was a load of fun and even the proposal "M-G-M can go screw!" didn't sour relationships.

The party itself was thrown at Marion Davies' 110-roomed house on the beach at Santa Monica. Two hundred people attended the affair

which had a circus motif. William Powell was a ringmaster, Howard Hughes a knobbly-kneed lion-tamer and Carole Lombard a pirouette.

> Amongst the celebrities not in fancy dress was Winston Churchill, who had previously seen rushes from the partly completed film and who was a close friend of the Hearsts at the time. It is difficult to form a mental picture of the staid Churchill standing by the piano as Bing commences to sing "Rollicking Rockaway Raoul".

The song's composer credits are to Bing and Arthur Freed. Until the party neither Bing nor Freed had been able to persuade Walsh to stand still long enough to listen to it. In Walsh's autobiography, EACH MAN IN HIS TIME, he quotes the following lines from the song in order to explain their relevance to him:

> "Rollicking Rockaway Raoul,
> When clad on a beach in a towel,
> He's tremendous, stupendous and grand,
> He's the lay of the land, the land.
> Oh, The Bowery, The Bowery,
> He'll never go there any more,
> And now that we're through
> M-G-M can go screw, says
> Rollicking Rockaway Raoul."

The reference to The Bowery is an earlier film directed by Walsh with that title. The success of THE BOWERY was partly responsible for his being asked to direct "GOING HOLLYWOOD". The 'Rockaway' reference is explained thus:

> "Marion Davies remembered he father talking about Big Tom Walsh. 'Who knows,' she smiled, 'we may have met when we were kids. Did you ever get out to Rockaway Beach?' When I assured her that I had explored about every inch of it, she nodded in apparent satisfaction. 'That settles it. On camera I will think of you as Mr. Walsh, but anywhere else you will be Rockaway.'"

Some forty years after filming "GOING HOLLYWOOD" Bing was asked to comment on his film experiences on the set and wrote:

> "Marion Davies as I remember her was a very warm-hearted lady of abundant good humour, who loved functions and festive occasions more than most. She loved festivities and was a marvellous hostess, always had some local jokes and pranks to play on the guests. The experience of making a picture with her was probably the last of the halcyon days. She always had a five or six piece orchestra on the set to play current hits between takes.
>
> Sometimes the interval between takes became quite lengthy. Our schedule in the picture I made with her stretched to unbelievable lengths - but it was a real joy working with her
>
> She was extremely kind to members of the crew, and thoughtful, too. She always remembered birthdays and anniversaries, and was most charitable. She was always surrounded by a coterie of old vaudeville performers and indigent actors who were fun.
>
> All in all, an association long to be remembered."

"GOING HOLLYWOOD" was the Christmas-week attraction on its release at the Capitol and Loew's Metropolitan Theatres in New York. It was in competition that week with "ROMAN SCANDALS" starring Eddie Cantor, "ALICE IN WONDERLAND" with an all-star cast and "FLYING DOWN TO RIO", the Astaire-Rogers hit at the Radio City Music Hall.

Critically the film was well received. The New York Times said:

> "The overwhelming magnitude of the latter-day musical pictures is gratefully absent from this one. It is warm, modest, and good-humoured. Bing Crosby has a manner and a voice, both pleasant."

On the other hand, "Picturegoer" magazine on this side of the Atlantic stated:

> "Through it all Crosby croons, apparently interminably. There are, I believe, some hardy people who cannot only endure, but actually enjoy it. I am not one of them."

The reviewer for "Picturegoer" was Malcolm Phillips. That he was in the minority was demonstrated by "GOING HOLLYWOOD" putting Bing in the Top Ten at the box-office in the USA for the first of many such appearances over the next twenty years.

The film was made during summer-autumn of 1933; release in Britain was in May, 1934. The songs in "GOING HOLLYWOOD" became Crosby-classics:

TEMPTATION: WE'LL MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES:
OUR BIG LOVE SCENE: BEAUTIFUL GIRL: REMEMBER ME?:
JUST AN ECHO IN THE VALLEY.

Bing also sang the title song with a chorus but this was not commercially recorded.

Editor: Thanks to Keith for a most entertaining story, complementing what Bing said about this remarkable production in CALL ME LUCKY. It will be noted that Bing maintained his life-long dictum of never, never, speaking ill, or unfavourably, of anyone. As most will know, too, Everett Crosby's deal was extremely remunerative for Bing!

The "Picturegoer" review must have been one of those which subsequently made the reviewer wish he had kept his mouth shut! He wasn't to know, however, of the long and illustrious film career that lay ahead. And, coincidentally, you will see elsewhere in this issue another review which almost comes into the same category - with one great exception. This 1934 reviewer did concede that Bing did sing rather well!

VIC BYNE of Slough suggests we should submit the following two items to the GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS re. LITTLE DRUMMER BOY:

(a) A jazz singer of the 20's with a performer of the 70's to have a religious theme record in the 80's top hit charts, and
(b) The oldest singer (74) to have a hit record in the British recording charts.

Hmm....perhaps we will!

On the next page you will find the 1933 film review already mentioned dealing with COLLEGE HUMOUR. And as a delicious contrast, an item from December 1982 - 50 years on, which all helps to illustrate, or underline, just how long the Crosby magic endures. And no doubt, will continue to endure.

(21)

A FILM TO PLEASE THE CROSBY FANS

17/8/33

"COLLEGE HUMOUR"

Reviewed by "Melody Maker" Special Representative

"COLLEGE HUMOUR," the new super Paramount film in which Bing Crosby is the star, the big vocal shot, and lady-killer-in-chief, opened recently at the Carlton Theatre with the usual big advertising boost and long fanfare of publicising trumpets.

One's reactions to the film depend entirely upon whether one desires to witness a good entertainment or whether one's visits to the theatre are prompted purely out of interest in Bing Crosby's own personal achievements.

If the former is the case, considerable disappointment is in store, for the film itself represents the scantiest entertainment. In the main, it consists of an incredibly disjointed hotch-potch of fantastic incidents which could have been connected with no college ever known in this world, not even ruling out those of which we read with such avidity in our boyhood days.

Plugged Theme

The whole thing is held together in the flimsiest manner, with scarcely a vestige of plot, and one's first impression is that one is viewing the film after about half of it has been cut out.

To come to Bing himself, the outlook is completely and utterly different, for in spite of his admitted lack of the essentials of acting technique, his immense vocal ability and his natural charm carry everything before him.

Bing sings several songs, his *pièce de résistance* in a vocal respect being, of course, "Learn to Croon," the big number of the film, in which his prowess in delivering is only exceeded by the number of times in which he sings it.

Bing vocalises on all kinds of impromptu occasions, and every other incident seems to be a forced one concocted primarily to give Bing's vocal chords yet another chance of being exercised. So often does this occur that we were quite surprised when a big "rugger" match, magnificently portrayed in the film, was not held up specially to give Crosby fresh opportunities to croon.

Singing Schoolmaster

Bing's rôle in the film is that of "Professor Danvers," a master of some subject or other at the college, although we are not told precisely what.

Amongst the surprising occasions upon which he bursts into song is one where he is in charge of a large class. This incident is exceptionally good, as a matter of fact, and amongst the students are several people who support Bing in a masterly way, including an unnamed trio of girls who seem highly promising.

Of course, there is the inevitable happy ending, with the young gentleman who drinks and disgraces his college being expelled and deprived of his old school tie in consequence, whilst the heroine throws herself into Bing's arms to the accompaniment of plenty of soft music.

On the whole, from my point of view, I would a thousand times prefer to see Bing Crosby in a short, as his singing is the only thing which held my attention through the whole tedious course of the film.

16/12/82

BING

The Old Groaner took the road to a £200m fortune

MONEY: Crosby was almost certainly the wealthiest entertainer in history.

At the time of his death, companies owned by him had interests in everything from oil and property to video and TV series.

RANCH

His empire was probably worth somewhere in the region of £200million.

HOME: At least seven houses including a mansion in San Francisco, an estate in Mexico and a ranch in Arizona.

FAMILY: He was twice married — his first wife died of cancer in 1952 — and had seven children.

His best-known child is actress Mary Crosby.

CLOTHES: At a time when popular entertainers were white ties and tails Bing was considered a rebel because of his fondness for baggy trousers and bright sweaters.

RECORD SALES: Bing recorded 2,321 songs in the years from 1926 to his death.

There was no year after 1926 when he did not release a record. Figures for his total number of records sold vary but it is believed to be nudging 500million.

His version of White Christmas remains the best-selling record of all time. It has sold more than 40-million copies since its release in 1942.

FILMS: Starting in 1930 Bing made 60 films, many of them awful.

His "Road" series of movies with Bob Hope were hugely successful and in 1944 he became the first singer to win an Academy Award for acting after the release of his film, Going My Way.

LIKES: People. Every fan who wrote Bing a letter received a personal, if brief, reply and Bing never refused to sign autographs.

DISLIKES: Lewd films. Bing deplored the fashion for nudity and four-letter words in movies.

GOLF

SPORT: Bing was a golfing fanatic. His Pro-am golf tournament in California is still one of the biggest events in the golfing calendar.

He played golf seven days a week and died in October 1977 on a Spanish golf course. He was 73.

COMING NEXT WEEK!!

ITS THAT MAN AGAIN: LIONEL PAIRPOINT with an unusual film quiz!

Once upon a time - it seems a long, long time ago - COMING NEXT WEEK! was quite an important feature of the cinema programme which most of us saw at least once a week. This was the feature that proclaimed the following week's films in a way that made you feel certain you dare not miss 'em! It seemed that to be a Hollywood ad-man in the hey-day of the movies, once needed to be an expert with the exclamation mark and an artist with the apostrophe in addition to the obligatory hatful of hyperbole. Can you identify the Bing films from excerpts from the lobby, or foyer, publicity of their times? Most of the quotes contain a clue to the title and as further assistance the films are listed in chronological order:

(a) DANCING....Tempestuous....Original! SONGS...Blazing...Haunting! STARS...Romantic...Crazy funny! GIRLS! Hot-cha Honies!

(b) Its a Circus! Something doing every minute! Don't bat an eye or wiggle an ear or You'll Miss Something! Bing's got a guitar in one hand and an Accordion in the Other!

(c) Strike Up The Band for Dixieland!

(d) They're Wicki-Wacki-Wooing In Hawaii! Bing Wows Shirley with His Singin' Of Those New Crosby Songs!

(e) The Jumbo of Musical Jamborees! Bing The Old Doc of Swing and Bea, The Laugh Line of the British Empire, Make Hey-Hey In The Zoo!

(f) Button On Your Blinkers, Folks! Take A Hot Tip from the Ol' Feedbay.... These Beebes Are a Four-Way Parlay for a Bellyful of Laughs!

(g) Bing's On A Honeymoon For Three !

(h) Bing! Bong! Bing! Bong! With Song and Sarong They Hit the Gong!

(i) Puts That Rhythmic Quiver in Old Man River !

(j) Bungle Through The Jungle With Bing, Bob and Dottie !

(k) Blue Songs...Love Songs...Swing Songs....Played and Sung to a Love Story as Big As Your Heart Can Hold! Its the Thrilling Climax to All The Musical Films Ever Filmed !

(l) A Thousand And One Arabian Nights! A Thousand and One Uproarious Sights!

(m) Paramount's Fun-Filled, Star-Studded, Song-Swept Story of How? Was born! (Resplendent in Technicolor)

(n) Sing, Bing...You're a Grand, Gay, Guy In Your Greatest Picture !

(o) Let Us Face It! 32 Stars Make Radio's Riot Show A Musical Mirth-quake On The Screen !

(p) They're Walking Away With The Laughter Prize! He's Duke! He's Chester! She's Somethin'!

(q) Its The Nearest Thing To Heaven !

(r) The Wonderful Stars of "Going My Way"....Together Again For The First Time in Three Years !

(s) She Wanted To Be A Film Queen - So They Crowned Her with Hollywood's Top Stars! An "Arm-in-Arm" Behind The Scenes Tour With Hollywood's Great !

(t) Some Men Talk - Some Men Plead - But Bing Just Sings To 'Em to Sell 'Em! After Four Rousing Love Songs Countess Joan T-I-N-K-L-E-S All

(Cont. over

Over Like A Crystal Chandelier - And Buys Bing's Scandalous Bill of Goods !

(u) The Hilarious Low-Down on High Life ! They're All Together For the First Time !

Well, that's how not only Bing's but all films were announced as COMING NEXT WEEK! Scandalously Extravagant! one might say.....for most of us they were preaching to the converted, to coin a phrase. That it was a Crosby film was enough. The answers appear further on in this issue.

IN A NUTSHELL

The following appeared in a Midlands paper, which one we're not quite sure, but we were glad to see it:

MY HERO:

Bing Crosby will always be my hero. He did everything so well and was the ultimate example of the superstar. I have named my dog Crosby in memory of him.

KEN GOODWIN,
TV comedian.

While naming a dog after Bing may be considered as a dubious gesture there is no doubt Mr. Goodwin put into a nutshell the real stature of Mr. Crosby.

ROY CHAPPELL our singing member with a TOUCH OF THE BINGS (and due to appear at the Waldorf in May) keeps busy and a nice break came his way when he was invited to appear in a Christmas showtime edition on stage of the popular TV feature MR. & MRS. This was at the Romiley Forum theatre on December 28 and 29 last. As on television, the master of ceremonies was Derek Batey. Needless to say, Roy did extremely well and greeted most enthusiastically by the big audiences.

We can forestall those "full of ideas and fun" members who, when selecting their DESERT ISLAND albums will add that, for companionship instead of a book, they would take Dorothy Lamour, sarong 'an all !

"When my name became better known I could count on Dixie to keep my head from getting too big. Like any wise wife, whenever she thought my ego was getting out of hand, she had her methods for shrinking me to proper size. She'd say 'Listen to the Romantic-Singer-of-songs-you-love-to-hear-Blues'. Or she'd call me 'The Bumptious Baritone', or 'Ole Gravel-Throat'. Or, when I'd try ineffectually to lecture the kids, she'd say, 'You're fooling the people, but you can't fool them, eh?'.....She cut a couple of records with me, but no one will ever know the ordeal I went through persuading her to make those records. Building the Pyramids would have been easier...."

Bing in his book CALL ME LUCKY.

(Cont. from page 14 - ATTACKING BING !)

possibly marked the "great divide". From then on Bing's voice took on a round blandness. Smooth, polished, diction always nigh-perfect, phrasing immaculate, interpretation sympathetic - the Bing, in fact, which began to overshadow the early husky, vibrant, indeed pulsating Crosby. So often you hear older people say "Ah, the early Crosby...." as if to say "Bing is always Bing, but those early days were truly magnificent."

> Its quite a thought, too, supposing Bing had sung NOW YOU HAS JAZZ in the early 30's? Impossible for the song hadn't been written then. True, his mid-50's performance in HIGH SOCIETY was virtuoso and quite unforgettable - but just how would he have sung it in, say, 1932? Well, listen to SHINE, MY HONEY'S LOVIN' ARMS, DINAH, SOME OF THESE DAYS, ST. LOUIS BLUES and we might get the glimmer of an idea!

Perhaps I've been labouring under a false banner and the thought . far from being a revelation, have long been held by many! No doubt some thoughts will be stirred and some interesting observations engendered. I did say all this was "to my own satisfaction"! How Bing changed, perhaps some will say EMERGED, from the young, vibrant, innovator to the BLAND, smooth, super-star, capable of handling with ease whatever came his way, be it vocal or otherwise.

Reg Bristo.

THE TRAGIC BRIDGE OF CWMBRAN: Members may like to know that the bridge which caused six deaths in Cwmbran last July when a driver tried to take a double-decker bus under has been removed. There had been tremendous agitation from people living in the road as it seems vehicles (not only buses) had been hitting it for years and frightening the life out of them.

It must be a sad commentary on the way perhaps we all drive automatically when signs are ignored. This bridge was very adequately sign-posted as to its approach and its height. Then again, how often does one, driving on a motorway, see the flashing signs indicating 30, 40, or 50 miles an hour limit portending a hazard ahead, slow down - and find most others continue to whizz by at 70 mph plus?

Demolition of the bridge was regretted by some; notably train-lovers and those who desperately hoped that one day the railway might again function up the picturesque valley, especially that Cwmbran seems to be growing in importance. And its demolition seems to put paid to such hopes tho', of course, another (higher) bridge could be built, or the road lowered.

Its actual removal was a good illustration of modern technology and equipment. It was taken down in less than half a day! A large crane, a bulldozer and a couple of pneumatic drills were used to astonishing effect. The crane first of all lifted the rails, sleepers and all, then the bulldozer swept all the ballast away. Pneumatic drills loosened the bridge butments in no time - then the crane just lifted the two girdered sides and the cross-piece girders that originally took the track - and it was finished!

Its removal will not lessen the sorrow for the victims; one still cannot go down that road and see where the bridge used to be without thinking about it. Many passionately argued that a small gradient either side of it would have lowered the road sufficiently to allow any vehicles to pass under safely. But no, its gone - even tho' it smacks of the stable door.

I.C.C. NORTH EAST

PRESENTS

AN EVENING TO COMMEMORATE BING'S

80th ANNIVERSARY BIRTH DATE at

THE RED HOUSE, QUAYSIDE

NEWCASTLE

UPON - TYNE

ON

SATURDAY 7TH MAY 1983

AN EVENING OF CROSBYANA TO ENJOY: PROGRAMME WILL INCLUDE FILMS, RECORDS, COMPETITIONS, RARE CROSBY ITEMS OF UNISSUED 'TAKES', SALES, ETC., ETC.

TICKETS (inclusive of dinner) £5

FURTHER DETAILS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM: JOHN JOYCE - PHONE NEWCASTLE 770404 (daytime) 878761 (night)

or 21 Birchfield Gardens,
GATESHEAD, TYNE & WEAR
NE9 7TJ

Designed for those members in the vicinity, BUT, open to all. Should you require overnight accommodation, this can be arranged at a small, reasonable, hotel by John Joyce. ALL WELCOME !

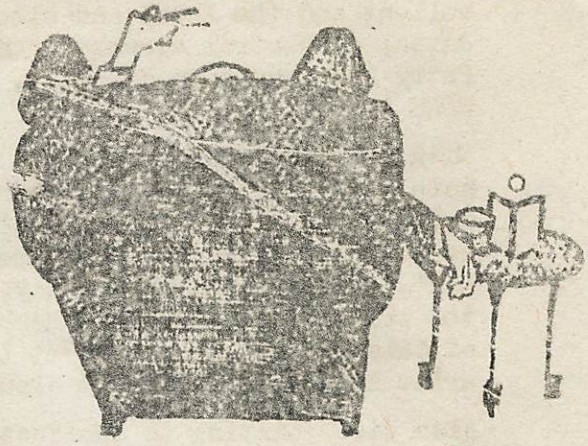
THE RED HOUSE comprises five houses all of which date back to the 16th century and they were operating as a catering establishment well over a 100 years ago. Thus they are of considerable historical interest. There has been considerable restoration and alteration to the interiors. The finest room is now the large dining-hall. It has two interesting stone fireplaces and a magnificent length of windows. The charm and historic value of the establishment is self-evident and makes a fine place for a function such as outlined above.

This is in no sense a rival to the function taking place in London; for a start, it is more than 300 miles away. It is yet another, highly important, function in the series we have long arranged in the North East. The 80th anniversary of Bing's birth is surely a date to be commemorated and remembered in as many ways, and venues, as possible.

We will be delighted to see as many as possible.

BING track EVENTS

with
BERT BISHOP
presiding



The record scene

Major happenings within the world of Crosbyana are, unfortunately, few and far between these days. After the fantastic mid-'Seventies when Bing was riding high on stage, TV and records in an ebullient burst of musical activity there came the inevitable decline following his demise; a peripateia which in the last year or two has left us hankering for more than the reissue of 'the best of'; a syndrome that seemed to have left MCA floundering in a sea of 'Forties flotsam. No disrespect to Bing's recordings of that era, of course, and one might say that as with cream the best rises to the top, but in the same parlance we've always felt that a little jetsam wouldn't come amiss from time to time either. Now, at last, we have two pressings on the market in the past couple of months which must be reckoned as being quite significant and very interesting. A welcome change indeed!

BING SINGS BROADWAY. MCA (UK) MCL 1730 Mono: £2.99p

Side 1:	Side 2:
The Eagle and Me	The Yodel Blues
Evelina	The Big Movie Show in the Sky
I Love You (based on 'Ich Liebe Dich' Grieg	If I Were a Bell
If I Loved You (1947)	I've Never been in Love Before
Close as Pages in a Book	I Still see Elisa
Just My Luck	Stranger in Paradise
Stay Well	No Other Love
The Little Grey House	Trust your Destiny to a Star.

Initially, there was some confusion as to the title of this release from what was going around on the 'grapevine' prior to its being available. 'Bing Crosby Rarities' was how several members heard of it, and it may well be said that this, though rather unimaginative, would have been a suitable title. With no less than six tracks previously unissued in the UK and several of the remaining ten tracks - what excellent value! - rarely encountered, it must be reckoned to be of considerable interest to collectors in all categories bearing in mind that these recordings have not been available for a quarter of a century at least.

As an example of age and rarity it should be noted that JUST MY LUCK from the slop show 'Nellie Bly' was only ever released in the States on a 78rpm in 1946; and STAY WELL, THE LITTLE GREY HOUSE, THE YODEL BLUES, THE BIG MOVIE SHOW IN THE SKY and TRUST YOUR DESTINY TO A STAR being first-timers here as well.

MCA and compiler Chris Ellis are to be congratulated on this imaginative album; one which is partly an amalgam of US Decca DL 5298 and UK Bruns-

wick LA 8675 (DL 5000) plus further tracks. The transference is excellent and the label and sleeve notes comprehensive, with recording dates, orchestral accompaniment and composer and show credits. Only Patty Andrews is un-credited, being the vocal accompanist on IF I WERE A BELL.

With all this going for it it is with regret and amazement that I note incomprehensible errors on the sleeve. Track 3 on Side 1 is not Cole Porter's I LOVE YOU from 'Mexican Hayride' but the song of the same title by Grieg, arr. Albert Sirmay from the show 'Song of Norway'. And this is, by the way, a perpetuation of a similar error on the original 10-inch LP! Happily the label (as opposed to the sleeve) of this LP does get it right but I'm surprised that Ellis should even write in his sleeve notes about the non-existent Cole Porter track.

Also disappointing is the fact that the recording date for IF I LOVED YOU is wrong by two years. So, we don't get the rarer 1945 version as stated. Two niggling title spellings also slip through the net of accuracy which one hopes for but seldom gets in any kind of printed word these days: EVALINA should be EVELINA and the correct title for the last track is TRUST YOUR DESTINY TO YOUR STAR, not A STAR.

However, don't let's invoke the Trades Description Act, as has been done in the past with a Crosby LP, for this album represents just the kind of compilation that we have been asking for from MCA for many a long year. We point out the errors not to 'knock' the album but because we at least like things to be accurate. It is to be hoped that Chris Ellis, now freelance, can convince his erstwhile employers (MCA) that further albums of this nature can be compiled if they'll only dig a little deeper in their archives of Crosby recordings. Look out for the light green sleeve with the Decca studio black and white photograph of Bing. The price is right - go out and buy it. Or as Leslie Gaylor suggests - get two copies just to encourage MCA!

(Editor: While fully concurring with Bert over the need for accuracy in notes, labels &c. it is only fair to point out on Chris Ellis's behalf that he too was horrified at the errors, especially that of mis-crediting I LOVE YOU to Cole Porter. The error originally arose with MCA (US) as Bert points out and was alas perpetuated here. Chris was away for some weeks due to bereavement after making the compilation and thus missed the opportunity for normal final checking. He says it will be corrected on future pressings. Chris also confirmed in his letter to us that since being made bedundant by EMI last year he compiles albums on a freelance basis. Further Crosby issues will depend on the sales of BING SINGS BROADWAY. Most members will know that Mr. Ellis is a considerable figure in the vintage music world, both as record compiler and as a performer. He sang the Crosby vocals, for instance, when the "New Paul Whiteman Orchestra" was in action 2-3 years ago. Now Bert resumes:)

PEACE ON EARTH/LITTLE DRUMMER BOY RCA (UK) 12" Single 45rpm stereo

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Following the report in this column in the Christmas edition of the issue of the above title on a standard 7" single, we now find that RCA have issued a really handsome 12" picture single with added lead-in dialogue in a 'Limited Edition - Full length Unedited Version' as it states on the bright red, holly-decorated, sleeve. This is the second major eventto which I referred at the commencement of this column for not only is this quite a charming duet, culled from Bing's 1977 Christmas TV Special, 'Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas' but is also a further title to add to the commercial listing, AND, for

Bing a brand-new record format. This is almost turning full circle, for some of Bing's earliest recordings were on 12" singles, albeit played at 78rpm instead of the 45rpm we have here. (It's almost a pity he didn't record on cylinders as well!) Surely every ICC member saw the TV show and will remember the unlikely duetting of Bing and Bowie....David Bowie, that is, of the ultra modern pop era, but here, as Bing's guest, turning traditional with lightly humorous patter and conventionally sung carols.

I wonder, though, how many members saw them for the second time when they appeared in the BBC programme 'Top of the Pops' (Bing's second appearance in this programme - again an unlikely event!)- for the record got as high as No. 6 in the best-sellers charts as listed by New Musical Express, No. 3. in other 'lists'. Christmas 1982 - and Bing in the Top Ten once more....oh yes, quite a noteworthy event, and as far as I'm concerned this particular version is definitely a collector's item.

BING CROSBY FOREVER RCA NL 43860 2-LP German Stereo/Mono

Side 1 (mono)
I'm Gonna Sit right down and Write myself a Letter.
Whispering
Dream a Little Dream of Me.
Let a Smile be your Umbrella.
Some Sunny Day
Down Among the Sheltering Palms
Exactly Like You
Mama Loves Papa

Side 2: (mono)
Mack the Knife
Just A Gigolo
Them There Eyes
Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams (1931)
I'm Through with Love
Just One more Chance (1931)
Its a Good Day

Side 3: (mono)
Mary
Make Believe
Muddy Water
High Water
Lovable
I'm Coming Virginia
Ol' Man River (1928)
Three Little Words

Side 4: (stereo)
Fancy Meeting you Here
Brazil
I Can't Get Started
How About You?
You Came a long way from St. Louis
It Happened in Monterey
Isle of Capri (1958)

By now well known for their composite albums, viz WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS and A LEGENDARY PERFORMER, RCA have expanded this theme in the shape of an open-out double LP set from Germany which ranges from 29th April 1927, I'M COMING VIRGINIA, through to I CAN'T GET STARTED, recorded 11th August 1958; a span of thirty-one years, and which takes in several early, uncredited, solos including the relatively rare MUDDY WATER and the dramatic HIGH WATER, only recently readily available on the BIX 'N' BING collection. THREE LITTLE WORDS, the Rhythm Boys' only track with Duke Ellington, is another recording that may still be missing from many members' collections. But perhaps the rarest track of all here is ITS A GOOD DAY, one of four recordings cut on 28th January 1960 with orchestra and chorus arranged by Bob Thompson and originally only issued in the States by RCA Victor, with a subsequent appearance on an Australia RCA EP - and more recently on a Japanese LP; and now to Germany!

Again RCA have given us Bing's first National Radio air-shot with I'M THROUGH WITH LOVE and JUST ONE MORE CHANCE of 2nd Sept. 1931, but over half the albums are devoted to the oft-released tracks culled from BING WITH A BEAT and FANCY MEETING YOU HERE - which, I may add, is no surprise at all!

The yellow and brown sleeve features a 'fifties studio shot of Bing,

head and shoulders, and unfolds to reveal nine further photographs of him at various stages in his career. There is the inevitable potted biography, both in German and English, reasonably accurate and suitably deferential. Quite a nice package, very well presented, with fully dated orchestral accompaniment credits. Where to get it? It should be available from the usual import sources quoted from time to time in BING - but it will cost you close on £8.00

(Editor: It will pay to look around, however, for Vic Byne of Slough picked it up in that town! For £4.99 too, I understand! - How it got there we don't know. We can only repeat: Look around!)

THE GREATEST JAZZ RECORDINGS OF ALL TIME — Franklin Mint Record Society, UK FREEPOST, London SE6 2BR

Compiled by The Institute of Jazz Studies this 100-LP collection is only available by post from the address given, and even now the subscription date may have closed. If that is the case, you will have saved yourself the £865 this complete collection will cost subscribers to the bi-monthly release of a 4-record album. No details of Bing's contribution to this all-time mammoth collection, except to say he is in there with every great musician and vocalist from the golden age of jazz and swing. Advertised in the press, the inclusion of its existence in this column is not because we believe anyone will be queuing up to buy it but for the purists and to maintain as much as possible a complete record of every kind of new record release by the peerless Bing Crosby. Could be there may be someone among our members who WILL writ and enquire and inform us of just which of his recordings are involved in this undertaking?

BERT BISHOP concludes there, with our thanks as always. A couple of record items may be added as an addendum. K-TEL, the firm that makes a speciality of compilations under license presumably from the major companies of records that have more than had their 'mileage' have come up with an album entitled I'LL BE SEEING YOU. It is a selection of War-time favourites including three Crosby items, viz. BLUE OF THE NIGHT, MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU, and SWINGING ON A STAR. No one will rush to buy this, especially at a price of £5.99, for the Bing content alone. Rest of the titles are by Glenn Miller, the Ink Spots, Mills Bros and other great artists of those times. The number is K-TEL NE1188 .

It will almost certainly become available at around 99p in a few months - as happens to a lot of these compilations, especially in these days of badly needed cash-flow (how we all so easily adopt the new economic jargon!). One of these is the Warwick (WW 5112) THE VERY BEST OF LOUIS ARMSTRONG: 20 GOLDEN GREATS. This has been noted here before as it contains the memorable GONE FISHIN' duet with Bing as well as the 'extra' recording of PENNIES FROM HEAVEN Bing did with Louis Armstrong and Frances Langford, with Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra on 17th August 1936, each of the trio taking a chorus. On this album, however, the Frances Langford effort has been omitted, leaving Louis and Bing in that order. Woolworths have been offering the record at just 99p! This is certainly worth picking up as in addition to the two tracks already mentioned, it also contains a duet by Louis with Gary Crosby - EASY STREET. And as we've remarked before no doubt, on this again Gary shows that of Bing's six sons, he was the only one who, with application, could have developed the Crosby voice! Listening to EASY STREET one can easily detect his paternal origin!

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Its probably unnecessary to observe that one has to shop for records - and other things for that matter - with care these days. The Armstrong/Bing record we've just been talking about was, as said, offered at 99p in Woolworths; in a shop less than 100 yards away it was also on offer - still at £4.99p! And I bought BING SINGS BROADWAY most gratefully for £2.99. In another shop a few minutes later it was available at £2.75! We thought the end of Retail Price Maintenance would be a good thing - it is, provided you are prepared to shop around. Then the question of shoe-leather comes into it!

Just one further 'oddment' to record for posterity; the 'Living ra' label which produced BIX 'N' BING have issued an album plainly entitled FILM STARS. This contains one Bing track: PLEASE, recorded Sept. 16th, 1932 - just a fortnight after Bing's first coast-to-coast solo broadcast, already mentioned by Bert Bishop. Sadly, this one item - one of Bing's very first really big hits - contains an error for it says the accompaniment is by Irving Aaronson and his Commanders instead of Anson Weeks and his Orchestra. Puzzling, especially as Geoff. Milne is connected with 'Living Era'.

There is a small biographical note about all the film stars featured on the album. In the case of Bing this is of particular delight for it reads:

> "Despite the efforts of certain iconoclastic 'biographers' since his death, Bing Crosby remains the best-loved entertainer of the Twentieth century...."

'Iconoclastic' being the act of attacking the cherished beliefs of large numbers of people.

As with all these odd Crosby items on album collections members will weigh their Bing interest with, perhaps, the remainder of the items on the album. This one is of fine historical film interest. The sleeve bears a tiny picture round its border of all the film stars featured. Price is around £4.99 alas.

We said 'one further item' but we should also mention that Polydor have - already! - reissued the SEASONS album. The record itself is precisely the same as that issued previously, but there is a minor change in the sleeve, being a border round the edge! The record appears in Polydor's NICE PRICE range but it is difficult to believe any of our members are without the SEASONS album. But, there it is. Reissued, price £2.99p

BING PROGRAMME TO NOTE

Members in the London area and others able to pick up London Radio will almost certainly hear a programme paying tribute to Bing presented by BRIAN RUST. Thanks to Wembley member JOHN BIGNELL who made the suggestion to Brian which has been enthusiastically taken up, this will prove a happy curtain-raiser to the Waldorf function for it is scheduled for Friday, 6th May. John further suggested a jazz-orientated programme of Crosby records in place of the usual Bing material invariably used in such programmes and even submitted a list of 15 of such tracks for Brian's consideration.

Incidentally, in his reply to John Bignell, Brian Rust with no encouragement or even mention of the book, showed himself as passionately indignant over THE HOLLOW MAN in a manner which stamps him as an avowed Crosby admirer.

discrosby

....about Bing records of all decades, a never-ending source of delight and discovery.....

We often dwell on the sheer range of Bing's recorded offerings - delighting to range over Westerns, ballads, carols, Hawaiian, Irish, Latin-American, comedy, and so on - not forgetting, of course, narrations, story-tellings, poems, Bible readings, prayers and so forth . The sheer versatility is truly astonishing.

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And often when we listen to some (the majority alas) of the crude cacophony that abounds today both on radio, TV, films and records, we feel that'singing' has, as a word or accomplishment, even as a gift, a totally different meaning today. Indeed, we often have the whimsical thought that nowadays Bing Crosby should more correctly be described as a classical baritone! And now, thanks to the issue of BING SINGS BROADWAY it can be said that the thought may not be quite so whimsical.

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Owing to the confusion occasioned by the two different songs entitled I LOVE YOU members, especially newer and younger ones, may be slightly astonished to learn that Bing sang the melody of Grieg. Assuredly he did - and another also, STRANGE MUSIC. He also sang a melody by Debussy (MY REVERIE), by Borodin (STRANGER IN PARADISE) Then there is Schubert's AVE MARIA; and we cannot omit Brahms (LULLABY) and the other beautiful piece, also LULLABY from Joceyln by Goddard.

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Such tracks come to mind without undue thought; there may be others if we care to browse through the discography. Adapting classical themes as more popular songs has always happened and perhaps the best-known was the emergence many years ago of the Chopin nocturne, 'Tristesse' as SO DEEP IN THE NIGHT. Many people objected to such adaptations in choleric terms! Provided the melody is not tampered with and is treated in musicianly fashion its difficult to see the objections, or at least, give too much heed to them. Once again we say we don't remember Bing singing SO DEEP IS THE NIGHT - which is a pity. We say 'once again' because in the previous issue we said we hadn't heard Bing sing SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

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Fortunately we added that "this doesn't mean he didn't sing it!" For sure enough we were quickly informed that he certainly did sing it in the KMH on the radio. We might have known! So often when putting us right on a query members have the habit of leaving us with another!

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Among those enlightening us was our esteemed tape/disc consultant, Lionel Pairpoint who proved the point by sending us a taping of SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY sure enough rendered by Mr. C. Lionel then discoursed on . JIM, JOHNNY & JONAS and while agreeing that it was a great and melodious record observed that the composers/writers didn't seem to know quite how to treat their song! It was given an Hawaiian setting but Lionel suggests that with minor alteration it would make a good 'country and western' song. And it could, too.

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Then Lionel left his query with me! He referred to the record of FAREWELL that Bing made in 1955 with the Ken Darby chorus. In this Bing sings a melodious and moving goodbye to the mountains, the home, the wife of his bosom indeed to 'ye all'. He further tells us that in the land of the strangers he'll rise - or fall. But he gives us no clue at all as to <u>where</u> he is leaving, to where he is <u>going</u> - and most importantly, why? Truly an enigmatic record.

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Could it be that it came from an obscure musical stage show, or a film and had to be listened to in context of the scene rather than on its own? Perhaps we'll never know. Chances are, however, that Crosby admirers are so completely ubiquitous that someone will tell us - and in the process leave us with another query!

***

Had a letter the other day from a chap who had been browsing through some old issues of BING - this seems to be a regular pastime with some and certainly one we can only applaud. However, this chap indignantly said he had come across a piece wherein John Bignell said he didn't like TEMPTATION. "Was he drummed out of the Circle with all due ceremony?" demanded our correspondent. No, of course he wasn't. We're a tolerant band - within wide limits. But we do remember blanching when we read this opinion of John's for most of us regard that song as a true Crosby classic. And, as Bing remarked, many other sings have got mileage out of this song since, especially Perry Como who had his first big hit with TEMPTATION about ten years after Bing had recorded it.

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The John Scott Trotter orchestra always included a harp; its trills and flourishes can often be detected. But not often was this ancient instrument used for solo purposes. If this was a quiz we might ask in which song was the harp actually given a few bars solo? And we would meaningful add YOU SHOULD KNOW! For one hears just this in the track CLOSE AS PAGES IN A BOOK on the new BROADWAY songs album. A very tasteful harp passage occurs bang in the middle after Bing's first chorus. Very listenable, too.

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In TRACK EVENTS we mentioned that Geoff. Milne appears to be associated with the LIVING ERA record people. It was a great blow to Crosbyana when, owing to the machinations at upheavals at Decca occasioned no doubt by the shifting of the MCA contract to EMI in this country, Geoff. Mile unaccountably lost his job with Decca. For make no mistake, Geoff. was undoubtedly the No. 1 asset for us with any record company. It is thanks to his sterling efforts while with Decca that we have so many really splendid albums - right up to the '70's efforts included.

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The loss of Geoff. Milne was brought home to me afresh when I took out the Coral albums the other day. He was another who strove to get away from the usual offerings and provide us with beautiful tracks not easy to obtain. Even leaving aside the Ace of Hearts issues of the 60's there were the fine Coral albums - three volumes of Bing with the Andrews Sisters, I LOVE YOU TRULY, RHYTHM ON THE RANGE - and DAY DREAMING.

***

What a lovely album is the last-named. From the title song which starts it, right through, a great collection of 14 tracks in the Crosby "bland" style. Invidious possibly to light on just one of them, but that song MAYBE. Glorious, haunting, plaintive song with a matching melody. And the orchestra! Here one hears the surge of cellos in a remarkable string passage, in the grand orchestral manner.

***

Supporting our "bland Bing" assertion it might be mentioned that all 14 tracks of this splendid record were recorded between 1939-42. The sleeve notes, also by Geoff. Milne, say:

> 'In this album we present Bing in a reflective style...through all the years of his incredible career it is doubtful if Bing had much time for daydreaming....but this didn't stop him from singing the kind of songs which might be considered in the general category indicated by the title of this collection'.

***

Take it down from the shelf, if only to listen to MAYBE. But while you're at it you should also listen to I'M BUILDING A SAILBOAT OF DREAMS, MISS YOU, DON'T BREAK THE SPELL, THE WALTZ OF MEMORY. In fact, listen again to ALL of them. They're worth it.

***

We might revert to I LOVE YOU and the confusion on the new album; its possible to have a certain amount of sympathy for the individual who made the original error. Who would have thought that there were two songs with that title (there is no copyright on song names) - and not only that, but that Bing recorded both in the same year! There certainly was room for error. There but for the Grace of God..... And its fairly safe to assume he didn't appreciate the lynx-eyed treatment his findings would ultimately receive from the dedicated!

***

One doesn't expect to get a shock doing a harmless column such as this; yet it happens! Browsing thro' those Coral albums I was truly astonished to find that it is now ten years since they were issued - and I still think of them as 'new'! Truly its later than we think. And that song MAYBE again - I know that if I play it it will be running around in my head for days afterwards, such is its appeal to me. I note it was written by Geo. and Ira Gershwin and I don't recollect others singing it although they must have done.

***

Not to be confused, of course, with the nice song MAYBE that the Ink Spots used to sing so melodiously. Totally different. Perhaps the Gershwin MAYBE appeared in a film. I suppose one really should pay more attention to the composers/writers of songs - they certainly deserve it. On that same Coral album which contains MAYBE (i.e. DAY DREAMING) there is a song YOU ARE THE ONE. I've had the Coral

for ten years; I've had the 78rpm record for about four times as long as that and I'm rather ashamed to confess that only recently did I notice that this song is credited to "Trotter-Carroll". I've never seen it referred to anywhere or heard anyone mention it but surely this must have been a songwriting effort by John Scott Trotter, and Carroll Carroll, whose niche in Crosby history was achieved by writing the scripts for the Kraft Music Hall.

***

So they dabbled in the composition field, too. J.S.T had a go at composing we know - EVERY TOWN IS PARIS WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG is one of his efforts tho' not on commercial record. Perhaps the knowledgeable ones can come to our aid again?

***

Apart from the errors on BING SINGS BROADWAY dealt with by Bert Bishop in TRACK EVENTS there are other surprising inconsistencies about the issue when you come to study the detail on the sleeve and then the data on the actual record label. Some of the accompanying musical directors are shewn on the sleeve; they and others are shewn on the label. But there are some of the songs which don't have the MD on either! The ones missing altogether are:

THE EAGLE & ME:	Camarata & Orchestra.
EVELINA	"	"

***

Actually the album presents quite an array of directors, e.g. Camarata, John Scott Trotter, Jay Blackton, Russ Morgan, Vic Schoen, Axel Stordahl, and Pete King - no less than seven! This may indeed be something of a record in itself.

***

THE ANSWERS TO LIONEL FAIRPOINT'S FILM-'COMING NEXT WEEK' QUIZ ARE:

(a) Too Much Harmony.	(b) We're Not Dressing.	(c) Mississippi
(d) Waikiki Wedding	(e) Doctor Rhythm	(f) Sing, You Sinners
(g) Paris Honeymoon	(h) Road to Sinapore	(i) Rhythm on the River
(j) Road to Zanzibar	(k) Birth of the Blues	(l) Road to Morocco
(m) Dixie	(n) Going My Way	(o) Duffy's Tavern
(p) Road to Utopia	(q) Blue Skies	(r) Welcome Stranger
(s) Variety Girl	(t) The Emperor Waltz	(u) High Society.

As this issue was moving towards completion we received the reports and pictures on television &c. of the terrifying fires raging in South Australia. The ghastly plight of the people came over dramatically and vividly and one thought instinctly of so many of our members living in that part of Australia. We pray they were spared some of the horrors we saw.

The total irony was that these pictures and reports came to us when we were in the grip of a really icy spell, to which could be added the 'delights' of the water-workers' strike. Truly the opposite ends of this earth. And the fires in Australia again demonstrated that mankind is subject enough to natural disasters without actively working for them and bringing them on ourselves.

LESLIE GAYLOR WRITES

and that delights all members.....

As the New Years seem to come around so quickly, and this one is now well-advanced, I must once again wish all members a prosperous 1983; that is, if its possible in the economic climates we are subjected to these days. Thanks are also due from me to those who sent me so many Christmas cards. As I send out a considerable number of such cards myself I'm sure the members realise there has to be a limit on this.

I receive many cards simply signed Fred, Peter,
Jim, Harry, etc. and I know not from whom they come!

I was rather pleased that the Bing-David Bowie recording of PEACE ON EARTH/LITTLE DRUMMER BOY, taken from Bing's last Christmas TV show in 1977 got many plays on radio and to the No. 3 spot in the British "pop" charts. Actually this recording came over best when seen and heard via the video recording. I say this because Bing's voice was recorded at a too-low level, causing a loss of presentation when heard via the sound recording only. I was fortunate to pick up a copy of this record through the good offices of Editor Reg a week before the release date. RCA had told him that the record was coming out. The ever-enterprising girl at a local record shop who orders her stock via telephone calls, soon had the record sent down to me.

The next bit of luck I had came from a fella on a local radio station at Portsmouth by the name of George Reid. He played a recording one Sunday evening of this Christmas recording which featured the dialogue between Bing and David Bowie. I wrote to him about this and lo! and behold he put a deejay promotion copy of a 45rpm 7-inch record in the post for me which had the same recording both sides but one side, identified as the AA side, had the dialogue on.

Soon afterwards further luck came my way from my ever-thoughtful friend Judge Francis Smith of the Supreme Court of New York. Frank had located in a New York store a 12-inch single of these two Christmas tracks and this gave me a surprise as I had no idea that this larger record existed. I noted it was described as a "Limited Edition" and closer examination revealed that it was manufactured in England.

I then thought immediately that this was a pressing designed for the American market but I was to learn a little later that a Bing fan in England had got hold of a few of these 12-inch singles, and probably available in England in a limited supply. (They were in Cwmbran, not notable for its record shops! - Editor)

The large picture label showing Bing and David Bowie is quite impressive.

At the same time as Judge Smith sent me this record he airmailed me a cassette recording which was nicely package of a Bing Crosby Philco Radio show which also featured Judy Garland. This tape runs for 15 minutes each side and is the same show that is featured on the Black Lion label record BLM 52003 released in Britain last November. Mention of this album somehow got omitted from the last issue so here for everyone's benefit is the data: Black Lion BLM52003 - THE BING CROSBY PHILCO SHOW: FEBRUARY 26 1947 - guests THE ANDREWS SISTERS; THE BING CROSBY PHILCO SHOW NOVEMBER 27, 1946 - guests JUDY GARLAND and LES PAUL.

Still on the subject of records I was quite thrilled to have had some advance data last November from the girl at the local record shop al-

ready referred to. Whilst talking to a representative of MCA records she learned that a Bing record was to be released on December 10 last and described as RARITIES - BING ON BROADWAY. It was released eventually on January 14 and I'm pleased to note the reaction of those who managed to pick up a copy pretty quickly. The album was compiled, as you've already learned and noted, by Chris Ellis. On the occasion of the telerecording of Bing's second Parkinson Show for BBC-TV on July 18, 1975 I had the good fortune to be introduced to Chris by record producer Ken Barnes. We were waiting in a passage near Bing's dressing room and I noted Chris managed to get Bing's autuograph on his set of THE VERY BEST OF BING. It was Chris Ellis who compiled that set. I too wrote to him on the release of BING SINGS BROADWAY and received a nice reply on the lines you've read in TRACK EVENTS. May I suggest some members will be possessing more than one copy of the album to help make it a success - for obvious reasons.

Among the album ideas I have submitted to Chris Ellis is a beauty called SONGS FROM STAGE AND SCREEN using items like MARRYING FOR LOVE, THE BEST THING FOR YOU, LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE, MORE AND MORE &c.

Another concept I hope he will consider is something like BING AND THE BANDS. This would be a great album of items like the records Bing made with Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Sy Oliver, Les Brown and his Band of Renown, and Dave Barbour's Orchestra.

Using the Bing recording of WE ALL HAVE A SONG IN OUR HEARTS as a title., I have come up with a listing of interesting recordings that have long been sought after. Hence my plea, therefore, to all members to help make BING SINGS BROADWAY a good sales success.

Whilst on the subject of records I would like to note that another friend of mine in the States (Phil Smith, ILLINOIS, - not a member) gave me a lead that with a little perseverance on my part enabled me to get a record I've been after for two years. This is entitled THE GREATEST CHRISTMAS SHOWS ARX100 - a real beauty which many don't seem to know about and which the actual manufacturers said they didn't produce: Chesterfield broadcast Dec. 21 1949, guest Ethel Barrymore and a Chesterfield show of Dec. 7 1950 with Judy Garland, re-broadcast Dec 19, 1951 with The Crosby Boys.

Members will have read earlier in this issue of the publication of Kathryn Crosby's book MY LIFE WITH BING. In the first week of January this year I was pleased to have a little hand-written note from Kathryn as follows:

> Dear Leslie,
>
> I wanted you to have this release on my book about Bing. The publisher tells me that anyone who wants to be sure of getting his copy of the limited edition should have his order in by January 20.
>
> I pray for you and your eye often, Leslie. I hope you are well and happy.
>
> Sincerely,
> KATHRYN.

By the time this is in print I hope to be the proud owner of a special pre-publication copy from the States once again through the good offices of Judge Francis Smith who has arranged for a copy to be airmailed over to me.

A recent additional item for my BING ROOM came from Jonathan Schwartz

of radio station WNEW in New York, a station with nostalgia very much in mind. Jonathan is the son of the famous songwrifer Arthur Schwartz and he sent to Judge Smith a couple of the fine coloured calendars for the month of November last, made for Station WNEW. Throughout the month, each day's 24 hours was devoted to the music of any one singer, or singer-with-big-band, or singing groups of the old school.

> Bing was featured for 24 hours on November 6, only less the time for news broadcasts and traffic cond ion announcements. Despite being in bed with 'flu Judge Smith felt considerably bucked up listening to Bing for virtually 24 hours!

Jonathan Schwartz went to some lengths to explain how Ken Barnes, Pete Moore etc. went about updating the Bing-Buddy Cole CBS radio recordings. Brilliant in their original form, they were given the modern accompaniments to make them more suitable to the commercial record market and to satisfy the financial backers who made it possible for the recordings to be acquired.

There are those in the record business who don't wish to pay out large sums of money for old recordings in order to release them to a few hundred record enthusiasts. Even the Crosby organisation didn't want to release the CBS Bing-Cole tracks if they couldn't get a good return on them.

They are 'hard bargainers', which is why so many CBS recordings in their originalform are still lying idle in Beakins Warehouse in Hollywood. Even the former American Decca people gave up releasing any further CBS radio recordings after issuing a handful some twenty-odd years ago because of lack of mutual agreement.

I meant, in the last issue of BING, to have mentioned a Saturday morning BBC Radio 2 broadcast called 'Starchoice'. I happened to listen to the programme hosted by famous orchestra leader Geoff Love. He played one of Bing's recordings and mentioned that when Bing was in London arrangements were being discussed for him to make recordings with Geoff Love and his orchestra. But things fell thro' for recording in London when Bing explained that he wanted recording to start at 8am as he wanted the rest of the day for time to play golf.

Geoff then said that his orchestra recorded the basic orchestral tracks in London and Bing laid on his voice in the USA at a later date. I have Crosby office data on the album BING CROSBY ON THE HAPPY SIDE which states clearly that Bing dubbed over orchestral tracks recorded in London. The same goes for another album that has never been issued anywhere so I suppose that this is the connection Geoff Love was talking about

> I have received numerous letter saying members are looking forward to the Bing "get-together" organised by John Marshall in London on May 7. Excitement is building up and it is hoped by all there is a good turn-out to honour the great man. I hope all goes well for John and his helpers (if any!) and I hope to see some of your on that occasion.

Early remittance of annual subscription when the "X" appears in the appropriate 'box' on page 3 is necessary to ensure continuance of The Circle.

TRADING POST

--the market-place for your wants and disposals in Crosbyana: records, tapes, books, pictures &c. Insertions are free tho' there is a nominal charge for non-Crosby items. We print insertions in good faith and rely on the integrity of members. No responsibility, however, is accepted for any transactions arising from this feature and it is up to members to satisfy themselves they are making a satisfactory deal. Keep entries to a maximum of six lines; if lengthy lists of nos. &c. is involved invite a SAE.

MRS. RENEE CHESTER, 48 Milton Rd., London, W7 1LE has virtually all Bing's films on video, wanting only two to complete; she is prepared to help others. Write, with SAE, for list on the VHS format. Renee also has a limited number of the Bing lapel badges (Bing's face) at 50p with a SAE. Useful for the Waldorf.

MISS P. M. WOODWARD 109 High St, Pershore, Worcs. WR10 1EQ has the BING GOES LATIN LP in excellent condition for disposal...offers?

GORDON HOOPER, 20 Links Rd., Lancing, Sussex BN15 9BY wants the following films on VHS if anyone can help: STAR-SPANGLED RHYTHM, BIG BROADCAST 1936; WAIKIKI WEDDING EMPEROR WALTZ, TOO MUCH HARMONY, GOING HOLLYWOOD, HERE IS MY HEART, TOP O'THE MORNING.

MISS PAT FORSTER, 'Seasons' 12 Cavalier Close, Midhurst, West Sussex has LE BING - SONG HITS OF PARIS 10" LP LA8645 for disposal. Excellent condition. Offers.

10" LPs for sale: Brunswick LA8686, 8674,8513,8727, 8730,8723,8742; FONTANA TFR 6000, 6012; Columbia 33S1936 (3 No.) RCA-VICTOR - 'Colombo, Crosby, Sinatra' LPT5 - all in very good condition. Written offers please to: JIM LOWE, 105 Renfrew Close, Strait Rd., East Ham, London E6 4PQ. Jim is also keen to acquire BING PICTORIALS 1-10; Any private LPs from the ICC, Crosbyana Collectors Library, etc. And BINGANG/CROSBY COLLECTORS/ magazines. For purchase or exchange - J[illegible] has interesting items for consideration in exchange.

BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD the hardback book of ALL Bing's recordings in both alphabetical and date order is approaching its second pressing when the price must go up from the present £3.50 post paid. It was erroneously given as £3 in the last issue. Write to:

JOHN JOYCE (BOOKBINDERS)
Saltmeadows Rd.,
Gateshead, TYNE & WEAR
NE8 3AH

The volume is, of course, a special perk to members. It would cost double elsewhere - if it were available. Which it isn't! OVERSEAS MEMBERS FOR THIS BOOK NOTE: European £4.00 post paid, US/ Canadian £4.00 surface mail, £6.00 airmail. ALL REMITTANCES MUST BE IN STERLING AND ALSO MUST BE PAYABLE TO

JOHN JOYCE. ICC ACCOUNT

There can be few without this invaluable book which apart from its reference value affords hours of browsing.

BARRY ADAMS, Flat 1, 45 Knock Rd., Belfast, N. Ireland BT5 6LA makes a remarkable offer: I wish to put my entire Bing collection on offer to members. I have 450 78s, 300 LPS., V-discs. plus books &c. including that by Dr. Mize and all the important ones. I have virtually a complete collection of commercial recordings tho' not all 'takes'.

(Editor: I imagine Barry is in for a hectic time! He invites members to state their requirements with a SAE - and their bids.)

TREVOR WAGSTAFF, 49 Dawes Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 6AJ would be glad to hear if anyone has a spare SEASONS badge - the one Polydor issued for advertising.

ENTRIES ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER FOR THIS FEATURE GO A LONG WAY TO ENSURING INSERTION.

Just one copy of Ken Barnes's book, THE CROSBY YEARS, remains from our special bulk purchase. Price is 10 inclusive of post & packing - price from the publishers, if indeed it can still be had, is £10.95 plus postage. First come.....

The following three publications remain available:

THE LP-OGRAPHY OF BING £2.00
THE ABC OF BING (An analysis of varying takes of Crosby records) by COLIN PUGH £2.50

PHILCO RADIO TIMES (details of radio programmes) by LIONEL PAIRPOINT £2.50

Above 3 all post-paid at prices shewn.

Bing ties with the silhouette motif, are available in dark blue or maroon, price £2.80 post paid, from THE BADGE CENTRE, 45 Ropergate, Pontefract, West Yorks - look smart with most suits!

And if you're not fully equipped with ICC car-stickers, 3" circular in rich blue and gold are available from BARRY THECKSTON, 13 Cunliffe Aven., Ramsbottom, Lancs. 66p each, or two for £1.00 post paid. Just send remittance and SAE.

JOHN BYRON, Tone Str., Ballina, Co. Mayo, Ireland would like if possible sound cassettes of the two Parkinson shows, the Wogan interview with Bing and any other radio interviews. Would be delighted to hear from anyone who can help in this direction please.

JOHN NORRIS WOOD, The Brook, Dewhurst Lane, Wadhurst, Sussex, TN5 6QE would like to purchase the soundtrack songs of HERE COME THE WAVES on (sound) cassette - sadly he missed the film on TV recently.

R.S.(BOB) JONES, 39 Gladstone St., Hebburn, Tyne & Wear, NE31 2XD is always interested in acquiring Crosbyana - records, tapes, books, &c.

ARNOLD BAKER, 48 Groomsport Rd., Bangor, Co. Down, N. Ireland offers a wide selection of tapes - radio programmes, US. and Australian, rare items, compilations on good quality C120 cassettes or as required. Price £3.00 UK post paid Reel-to-reel also available. Send medium-sized SAE for catalogue of material available.

JACK SOUTHER, 2011-44th Avenue, San Francisco, Cal. 94116, USA is always interested in contacts for Bing and other vintage material, records, sheet music, books &c.

JOHN JOYCE, 21 Birchfield Gardens, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE9 7TJ is always interested in Bing records, books, &c. for sale, from 78s to LPs. Rarer issues particularly wanted.

BELATEDLY IT HAS BEEN NOTICED THAT ON A FEW ISSUES, THE NAME ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE, COLUMN 2, OFFERING THE BING COLLECTION MAY BE INDISTINCT. IT IS:

BARRY ADAMS,
FLAT 1, 45 Knock Rd.,
Belfast,
N. IRELAND.
BT5 6LA

It is with deep regret that we record the death of HOWARD ROWLEY, of Codnor, Derbyshire on January 4th last, from the dreaded scourge of cancer. He had several times attended the Leeds events and many will remember Howard. On these occasions he was accompanied by his friend GERALD PERKINS of Loscoe, who gave us the sad news. Gerald tells us that Howard had been unwell for some time but that his death, and its cause, was quite unexpected.

There is another correction to be made! Following TRACK EVENTS we reported that Vic Byne had picked up the German double-album FOREVER in Slough for £3.99. Wrong - it was £6.99 - but still a bargain, Vic considers.

MEMBERS MAY LIKE TO WRITE TO: MGA RECORDS 1, Great Pulteney St., London, W.1. to thank them for BING SINGS BROADWAY. Every little helps !

BING LETTERS

Reg Bristo,
7 Greenmeadow Close
C W M B R A N
GWENT NP44 4PJ

VINCE WARING, 4 Alker St., Newtown, Wigan, Lancs: Regarding the item on page 48 of the Christmas issue regarding the Bing Crosby Friendship Club, I was a member of that just before the War and still have two or three of the magazines. On joining a new member would receive a large photo of Bing straight from Hollywood. I still have mine. And believe me, in those days that was really something. I was in my 'teens then and as far as Hollywood was concerned it was another planet, and if anyone had told me then that one day I would see Bing in person at the London Palladium and also in Preston it would have seemed an impossible dream.

I lose track with the club and Ted Mole through being called up for the Forces and after the war, well, you probably know how it was. If you do hear anything about Ted Mole and if he is still alive he may like to know that a few of his pages are still in existence - and if he would like to see them it could be arranged.

Editor: A real echo from the past; the note Vince refers to was a little paragraph in FILM WEEKLY of Feb 1938 inviting Crosby admirers to his club. Vince is the only member to date to have been a member and to have known Ted Mole. We would still like to know if he is around.

MIKE O'DONOGHUE, 2 Worcester Gardens, Cranbrook, Ilford, Essex: I could be wrong but I would have said that Bing's first film in colour was KING OF JAZZ, not DIXIE as stated in the Christmas quiz. I have no doubt the experts among the members will clarify the point.

Editor: Hmmm...well ....KING OF JAZZ was filmed in a method that gave tints. That is undeniable. On the other hand it wasn't in the "glorious technicolour" that came to be accepted (and standard) in the film industry many years later. So the point may be loosely divided - except, of course, that DIXIE was Bing's first starring role in colour.

RAY MORRIS, 35 St. Ives Grove, Leeds, West Yorks LS12 3RR: Although one of the cast-offs (redundant) I don't sit around and mope. I do quite a bit of Binging myself and am in an amateur concert party which performs for charity all over Leeds and sometimes further afield.

And talking about the concert party, our pianist is leaving soon and I just had the wild idea that you may know some ICC members in Leeds or the area who might like the job - unpaid, of coourse! Well, you know know, do you?

I have just read a book by Sammy Davis Jnr which contains an anecdote about Bing. Sammy recalled being present when Bing was filming a scene for EMPEROR WALTZ. Bing had to tell his little dog to jump

into a small carrier bag, then wqlk off with the bag. By the 14th take the dog had not performed and Bing, thoroughly exasperated, shouted: "Get your damned ass in here!"; the dog shot across the floor and into the bag in no time. Of course, the whole filming crew cracked up, but on the next take the scene went off perfectly. Davis went on to say this is the only occasion Bing swore, even mildly, when filming, and if anyone possesses the incident on film it would be priceless.

(on the previous page read 'lost' not 'lose' at start para 2.

Editor: Nice story - re. the unpaid pianist we can only weakly echo Ray and say...You never know!

ALAN PATTISON, 108 Nineveh Rd., Birmingham, B21 OTD: Regarding Bing and Gracie Fields I recall Gracie mentioning in a radio interview that had in fact sung THE BIGGEST ASPIDISTRA IN THE WORLD on a Bing show and that she had to reappear on the following show in order to explain to the Americans what an aspidistra was. Some of them had taken the lyric to be suggestive!

Editor: Well, whatever NEXT?

T. F. AYTON, 30 Hillsley Rd. Paulsgrove, Portsmouth, Hants: The Christmas issue was good reading. On page 44, I too thought Bing had recorded SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY but reading on I note you say "these chaps are beginning to make me doubt my memory." Well, did Bing record JEALOUSY, SOME ENCHANTED EVENING, JINGLE, JANGLE, JINGLE?

Editor: Oh no you don't! Not having me again! More seriously, Bing recorded SOME ENCHANTED EVENING with John Scott Trotter in 1949; he did not commercially record either JEALOUSY or JINGLE, JANGLE, JINGLE tho' the latter was sung by Bing on radio. I have no trace of Bing ever singing JEALOUSY but stand to be corrected. Its a good 'standard' Bing would have made a great job of singing. I cannot help pointing out that NO member should wrack his/her brains as to what Bing recorded with BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD so easily available! Radio songs are an entirely different kettle of fish, however. Its never been seriously worked out but it is probably safe to say that for every song Bing put on record, he sang a dozen or more on the radio. After all, he was on the air at least once a week for a very large part of his career. Then there's TV!

JILL STYRING, 13 Royd Avenue, Ainley Top, Huddersfield, HD3 3RY:

As I write, Bing & Bowie are climbing the 'charts' - this is a good thing to be sure. Never have been a Bowie freak - not my stle at all and I was extremely surprised when he was a guest on that last Christmas show of Bing's. Must say I can't complain about the duet he does with Bing. And of course, because of this release Bing is reaching a younger age range which he probably wouldn't do on such a large scale i.e. Top of the Pops. Of course, WE know he is - they wouldn't!

Editor: Jill sums it up very nicely. There can be little doubt that Bowie was included in the show to balance up the show and make it more appealing to all audiences, including the TOP OF THE POP-IES Jill mentions. We did receive a couple of jaundiced letters - one from a member who said he didn't want his letter published to upset the euphoria that had come over younger members on account of the record. No doubt, he said, he was the 'pessimistic character with the crabapple face' incarnate - but Bing did make an infinitely superior record of THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY in 1962. And no one had ever considered re-issuing that! He's right of course, but the general opinion was that no matter what the circumstances, it was good to see Bing prominent again.

PAT PETERS, 85 Croxdale Rd., Borehamwood, Herts: I've heard a new mention of Bing in a song; the music was to the tune they used for the old radio programme Housewives' Choice and Judy Covington has recorded it. Bing gets his share in the lyric!

I had to smile when my daughter, nearly 15 years old, came home from school to tell us one of her teachers at school played BUDDY CAN YOU SPARE A DIME for a particular lesson - all about the depression years, etc. At the end the teacher asked if anyone could tell her who the singer was. Needless to say, our daughter could and did. After all, said she, there's not many Bing Crosby records she doesn't know having heard them played at every opportunity since she was born!

Editor: Another delightful story - and what a lovely school! And daughter...

RAY LEACH, 48 Lindlings, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP1 2HE:
At the bottom of p.36 in the December issue you were no doubt referring to my letter re. Nelson Riddle &c ("unfair and a little ridiculous") I'm sorry, I just do not agree. Although John Scott had a nice orchestra and we know all about his idea of letting the singer carry the tune, there was something missing in quite a lot of Bing's records. They were EMPTY for want of a better word. Alan Dell has been playing one of Bing's Hawaiian albums over the last few weeks and I think it is beautiful - with NELSON RIDDLE. When you say it is ridiculous having a more modern conductor you are also saying that Ken Barnes's efforts were all in vain as you could not get more modern than Pete Moore in SONGS OF A LIFETIME and the other albums he did in the mid-70's. I'm sorry, but you are wrong in my estimation. I have held this opinion for many years. Bing was happy with John Scott Trotter and that's all that matters....

Editor: The last thing I wanted to do was hurt Ray's - or anyone else's - feelings. Ridiculous was a little harsh; but what was meant by it was that the vast bulk of Bing's recordings were made years before it became fashionable, indeed a cult, to highlight the orchestra leader's name in the way of Mancini, Riddle, Costa and many others. In fact, it was when Sinatra was revitalised, and singers like Andy Williams, Vic Damone, Tony Bennett began to come to the fore that the lush, often extravagant, orchestral arrangements became the thing. Mid-50's or later and then onwards perhaps. I agree with Ray about RETURN TO PARADISE; it is a lovely record and Nelson Riddle provides highly complementary arrangements. But, I could never agree that JST's arrangements or performances were empty. As I've said before, John never overlooked the fact that he was essentially an accompanist; nevertheless, yet overwhelmingly his arrangements were superb - for his period.

Regarding Bing/Cole tracks augmented....well, I can listen to the originals unadorned with equal, if not more, pleasure.

JIM BARBER, 306 Swanwick Lane, Lower Swanwick, Southampton SO3 7DA:
Talking about the letter from Ron Boseley and the possibility of a fire, it certainly would be a tragedy though I suppose sometime it has happened to a member? In fact, I'm sure Bing himself lost his records - and his home - by fire? You couldn't very well throw them out of the window, could you? Perhaps someone already has a good idea to save them in such a calamity.

Editor: You couldn't throw 78s out the window - unless you wanted a heap of shellac, of course. LPs might survive okay - what about a chute of some kind to land on a cushion in the greenhouse? Yes, Bing lost his home and records by fire - various stories have different versions of how they were replaced: by devoted admirers, or Decca

pressing specially for him, and on one occasion we read that Bing had actually purchased an entire collection. Fire is always a dread prospect in the home and elsewhere and the only thing is to be aware of that and take all possible precautions. End of sermon!

MIKE MANSLEY, 44 Danycraig Aven., Porthcawl, Mid-Glam, CF36 5AA:

I must say the regular appearance of BING on the doormat for so small an annual subscription puts to shame the pathetic 'newsheets' issued by the fan clubs of groups about which my 19-year-old daughter enthuses. I would like to say once again that I think you and the other contributors do a magnificent job and I only hope you can keep them coming for many years to come.

I must confess to having wondered, back in 1977, whether I would maintain my tunnel-vision for Bing in the years following his death. Five years on and my fixation is as strong as ever. That, of course, is the marvellous thing about records - the sad loss of the singer still leaves the voice and there are many records, even now, that I haven't got in my collection but can be found in the shops. I've just replaced the well-worn copy of FANCY MEETING YOU HERE and added THAT TRAVELLIN TWO-BEAT which I missed the first time around. I bought that in a record shop in 5th Avenue New York which stocked hundreds of thousands of records - but the only Crosby album was TRAVELLING TWO-BEAT. Incredible, but I've searched many record shops in the monthly visits I make to New York and have come to the conclusion that Cardiff and Swansea offer a wider choice than any of the North American stores I've browsed through.

Editor: Our once-in-a-while use in BING of a bouquet - thanks Mike. And I'm sure our worthy contributors will echo that. Yes, many times we've heard that there are more Bing records available here (and in Europe generally for that matter) than there are in the States. In fact, one reader about to depart for Chicago will note this; he asked where to look for Bing records!

CHAS. CULLEY, 'Four Seas', Barrow Rd., Denbarn, Bury St. Edmunds:

Personally, I love Christmas time....during the War years when I served in the Royal Navy and my older brother in the RAF, our family of parents and five children were always united in spirit at midnight on Christmas Eve when the family back home played Bing's recording of SILENT NIGHT. This created a very special bond and is yet another happy memory of a very special person - Bing. Although missing family and home terribly at Christmas time, through Bing we were able somehow to bridge the thousands of miles separating us.

Now in happier times and with a lovely wife, two married sons, their respective wives and one wonderful grand-daughter, I still get maximum pleasure from hearing Bing's presentation of all types of music, but in particular, that of Christmas.

Editor : So typical of many families, we feel....Bing was a very real part of life, and not just for one slice of the community, you notice. Its some years now since popular music had appeal for both parents and children. That's what Bing achieved.

THE LETTER ON PAGE 7 "WHITE CHRISTMAS AND THE OLD GROANER" we now discover was sent to us by member Frank Challenger and it came from the Nottingham Evening Post - to whom our acknowledgements. So Strelley would seem to be either in Nottinghamshire or Derbyshire if anyone can help in getting in touch with Claude Bishop.

JIM LEMON, 24 Lyndhurst Gdns., Belfast, N. Ireland, BT13 3PU:

Enjoyed the article in the Dec. BING on the OLD MASTERS set issued in America. I have a couple of brand-new Australian versions of this 3-album set which I would exchange with members.

I wonder how many members listen to Bing 78s on accoustic wind-up gramophones? Could it be that for the best part of the 30's this was the only way to hear Bing records? I wonder if Bing ever appeared on cylinders? Recently I have purchased a couple of cabinet gramophones; one is a Columbia with louvre doors, the other is a Metrophone.

The Columbia plays my Bing 78s beautifully and it all seems so autentic to me as I listen t' way to the early 78s.....

A query has baffled me for years: Concerning the song MAYBE YOU'LL BE THERE which, by coincidence, appeared on a recent radio compilation LP. I always imagined that I heard Bing sing this in a film, and I believed the film to be PENNIES FROM HEAVEN. My better judgement tells me that my memory has played tricks with me. Can anyone explain this to me - if it was not Bing, what was the film and who was the singer? Maybe Bing did sing a few lines of it in some film - please, please, an explanation. I can hear Bing singing this in his 30's voice in my mind.

Editor: Bing didn't record that commercially; nor did he sing it in PENNIES FROM HEAVEN. I'll leave it to others to tell Jim his memory is indeed playing tricks!

I do know of members who occasionally play their records on old wind-up gramophones but its hardly a desirable pastime. And while I can't provide a technical history of the gramophone I can give my own experience - which is still clear, even vivid, in my mind. Our first gramophone was also a Columbia, leatherette portable; but that was around 1926, and we played no Bing records on it. It was around 1930-31 that the moving-coil speaker was introduced; there quickly followed what was known as a pick-up, costing about 7/6d, or 37½p. You removed the heavy metal soundbox from the old gramophone and replaced it with this pick-up. Two leads went into the back of the 'wireless' and hey presto! you played your records thro' the wireless, greatly enhancing the sound. Very very soon the complete thing - pick-up and wireless - appeared in one cabinet and was the radiogram! And one had the benefit of hearing records thro' a good circuit and speaker - but the big drawback was that you still used steel needles! And these, of course, were pure cruelty to records; stylii were a long time acoming.

It was around Bing's emergence that the change from accoustic to electric players so it is true to say that Bing's records were not, mainly, played on old accoustic gramophones. Those who were fans between 1927-1930 would have done so, however. Incidentally, the louvre doors Jim Lemon mentions were the 'volume control' - you opened the doors for more sound. And you used "Loud" needles, for you could also get "Soft" and "Medium" needles - about 3½p per box of 50. I can only repeat, in my own experience, we played Bing from the start (for us 1931) by radiogram type. Before the pick-up/moving coil speaker developments, records on accoustic gramophones had no bass and, except for the bigger cabinet types, produced a rather 'tinny' treble sound. From about 1931 onwards it is true to say that developments in record reproduction (and radio) were very fast, even by today's standards.

TREVOR WAGSTAFF, 49 Dawes Aven., Hornchurch, Essex: Have written to ITN requesting a second showing of MERRIE OLDE CHRISTMAS, pointing

its 5 years since last being shewn on ITV, particularly now they have a second channel and also the success of the Bing/Bowie record. I also asked for a further showing of the Pasadena concert.

I think if you want something, you've got to make it happen. If we could suggest to members in the magazine they write in for requests on particular Bing anniversaries, i.e. 3rd May, 14th October, radio, TV, films etc. there would be a lot more Bing seen and heard. I believe 100 letters for a particular film on BBC-TV constitutes a showing. Perhaps you could manage a regular "request feature" with, say, a border round it for attention..

Editor: I get the impression our members are already busy writing to the BBC/ITV and local radio. Nevertheless, there is of course, merit in Trevor's suggestion. There is one obvious request for this issue:

BING'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH-DAY

There are two observations worth making, however. Concerted letters asking for the same films or records would instantly be recognised as an organised plan and therefore ignored! Secondly, having watched POINTS OF VIEW, I get the impression the BBC (and probably ITV) treat mail in that way, that is, faintly ironical, totally humorously! Yet it cannot be denied that public pressure <u>has</u> forced changes in the past. So, all members are hereby encouraged to write to BBC/ITV, and their local radio for request records and dedications on May 3rd next; and for more Crosby films on TV.

It is equally important we feel to write to MCA Records - address in this issue and in any case its on the rear of BING SINGS BROADWAY - for this could bring enduring results in the way of further albums. Letters should be addressed just to MCA RECORDS and not, we feel, to Chris Ellis himself. As you've read, Chris is freelance and not as it were stationed at MCA. It is important that the <u>company</u> know of our appreciation; letters to Chris are to him only unless, of course, he puts them back to MCA for consideration. And Chris knows we appreciate his efforts!

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME!

From the US showbusiness paper, VARIETY, of October 6, <u>1926</u>

NEW ACTS: CROSBY & RINKER - SONGS - Granada, San Francisco.

Two boys from Spokane, not new to show business, but new to picture house work. They appeared with Will Morrisey's Music Hall Revue, and were a success in a show that was a flop. Bringing their methods to the Granada, they registered solidly and on the crowded Sunday performances, practically stopped the show.

The duo works with a piano and minus orchestral accompaniments. Blues of the feverish variety are their specialty. They are well-equipped with material, presumably their own. Young and clean-cut, the boys found a quick welcome. When they have completed their weeks locally, they will unquestionably find a market for their wares in other presentation houses.

Wherever the public goes for hot numbers served hot, Crosby & Rinker ought to have an easy time.

Bing was 23 - and the world was waiting for him !

OSCAR MOVIES

GOING MY WAY

This was No. 17 in a series which appeared goodness knows where in 1973. But, it finds it way into our files and we think it will prove of interest.

1944 was the year Hollywood discovered there was real gold in religion. Not the religion of the super-spectacles like SAMSON & DELILAH, DAVID AND BATHSHEBA and THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, but the religion of a simple story of a young Catholic priest (Bing Crosby) who helps a lovable old Irish priest (Barry Fitzgerald) run the parish of St. Dominic's, a New York neighbourhood that no longer supports the heavily-mortgaged church.

The fact that the young priest proves to be something of a superman was joyfully overlooked by world audiences. From the moment he arrives in the parish he is immediately at work putting things right. He deals with a delinquent girl so smoothly that she rushes off to get married, he talks the delinquent kids of the neighbourhood into forming a church choir so that they sing 'Ave Maria' - and like it, he tours the country with the choir to raise funds when the church burns down, he writes and sings songs to help the parish solve its financial problems, he teaches Fitzgerald to play golf and, in a real tear-jerker of a climax, brings the old priest's mother across from Ireland on a surprise visit.

Real sob-stuff one would say today and so it was, but to dismiss it completely out-of-hand would be unfair to its creators and overlook the real craftsmanship with which it was made. In the 'Forties, Hollywood craftsmanship was considerable and often counted more than the story content. So it was with GOING MY WAY. The Hollywood Reporter described it as 'one of the happiest collaborations of the season.... a sheer delight, a superlative example of screen craftsmanship at its best, and an entertainment that will be forever cherished in the memories of all who see it."

High praise indeed, but it is probably true that most of the audiences who saw GOING MY WAY haven't forgotten it or its famous sequel, THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S which again starred Crosby. The thing that they remember best of all is almost certainly Barry Fitzgerald's performance as the irascible old Father Fitzgibbon. Here was a great piece of acting, bringing out the stubbornness, the goodness, bewilderment, and, above all, pathos of old age. No opportunity to tug at the heart-strings was overlooked, especially in the scenes when he returns abashed from having tried to run away in the rain, awakens to call goodnight after having been sung to sleep, or sneaks a swallow from the bottle of Irish whiskey which keeps him in small nips all year, "except for falling behind a bit in Lent."

GOING MY WAY won seven Oscars - best film, best actor, (Crosby), best supporting actor (Barry Fitzgerald), best director and best story (Leo McCarey), best screenplay and best song - WOULD YOU LIKE TO SWING ON A STAR, composed by hit song-writers Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen. It triumphed over such fancied contenders as WILSON (Darryl

F. Zanuck's mammoth tribute to the American president), GASLIGHT, SINCE YOU WENT AWAY and Billy Wilder's DOUBLE INDEMNITY.

There was some confusion about who should get what in the acting awards. Early in the year, the New York Critics, often a reliable barometer for the Academy sweepstakes, had named GOING MY WAY as best film and cited Barry Fitzgerald as best actor. A few weeks later in Hollywood, Crosby was named best actor and Fitzgerald best supporting actor. It was a difficult decision for the Academy voters. Had both Crosby and Fitzgerald been nominated in the best actor category one of them would have been bound to lose. But by putting them in separate categories they ensured that both had an equal chance of winning. And win they did, even if it was hard luck on Fitzgerald. The only major category not dominated by GOING MY WAY was the best actress award which was won by Ingrid Bergman for her terrified heiress in GASLIGHT.

As a footnote to GOING MY WAY, it is interesting to note that some two decades later it was adapted into an American TV series. Gene Kelly played the young priest and the late Leo G. Carroll was Fitzgibbon. The show was not a success and lasted only one season.

LEADING PLAYERS: Bing Crosby, Rise Stevens, Barry Fitzgerald, James Brown, Jean Heather, Frank McHugh, Gene Lockhart, Stanley Clements, Porter Hall (Paramount)

Bing told several stories about the birth of GOING MY WAY in CALL ME LUCKY. For example:

"When the picture was released and became one of the greatest box-office money-makers in all movie history, thousands of people asked where Leo got his conception of Barry Fitzgerald as Father Fitzgibbon. My own answer to his question is that Father Fitzgibbon was a blend of several priests. I should know because I was there when he was being born in Leo's head. My own idea is that one of the priests who inspired the conception of the priest role in GOING MY WAY might have been a priest whose parish for many years was Palm Springs. He's retired now, having called it a day when he was eighty-two. He was delightful and excessively human. Thirty-five to forty per cent of his congregation were - like myself - fugitives from the motion-picture colony who dwelled in Palm Springs from time to time.

If I came in late with a pal, he would very likely stop in the middle of a Mass, turn and say, 'So you just made it. Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Crosby are here, folks. Its very nice of them to show up. We ought to give them a hand, but I don't think this is the place for it.'"

"Leo (McCarey) has a genius for getting the kind of performances out of people that do not look like performances, but rather people being themselves up there on the screen. Even knowing this, I never felt that we were producing any masterpiece, or anything akin to greatness. I don't think Leo did, either. We had a lot of fun making the picture....."

Forever modest, deprecating Bing!